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# .. REVIEW ..

....OF....

## DR. JESSE B. THOMAS

ON THE

### WHITSITT QUESTION.

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(SUPPLEMENT TO A REVIEW OF THE QUESTION.)

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....BY....

REV. GEORGE A. LOFTON, D.D.,

Author of Bible Thoughts and Themes, Character Sketches, Harp of Life, A Review of the Question, Etc.

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"He who seeks the truth should be of no country."—*Voltaire*.

"There are few persons to whom truth is not a sort of insult."—*Segur*.

"Truth, like roses, often blossoms upon a thorny stem."—*Hafiz*.

"Truth, like the sun, submits to be obscured, but only for a time."—*Bovee*.

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## PREFACE.

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The articles of Dr. Jesse B. Thomas on "The Whitsitt Question" first appeared in the columns of the *Western Recorder*, and afterwards in pamphlet form, under the challenge that they were unanswerable and that nobody would likely undertake a reply to them. The humble author of this work applied to the *Western Recorder* for the privilege of reviewing Dr. Thomas, but the application was declined for reasons not necessary to mention. He also applied to other Baptist papers which for other reasons likewise refused. His only recourse for a hearing before the world is the present publication; and he leaves the success or failure of his effort to the verdict of his unbiased readers.

Another reason for the publication of this work is to meet more fully the criticism, in the *Western Recorder*, of Dr. Thomas, that the author has "misread" Crosby in the production of his recent book entitled, "A Review of the Question;" and the object of the present work is to supplement that. The author assumes the proposition, and stakes his reputation upon its demonstration, that Crosby's account of the restoration of immersion in England, (1641) clearly defines it as a general Baptist movement based upon the fact that immersion, as believers' baptism, had been "lost" by "disuse," and that there was no other period in the history of English Baptists, than 1640-41, when this restoration could have taken place. Dr. Thomas calls the movement an insignificant affair confined to a Pedobaptist Church; and if his position is not overthrown in the present work, then the author is ready to abide the verdict of failure, or else make his proposition good. With perfect confidence, he stands ready to meet the issue and abide the result until Crosby and other Baptist authorities are proven unreliable on this point.

The author begs a candid reading of the following pages. But few know anything of the subject at all; fewer still

have read both sides of the controversy; and no man can form any just judgment of the question at issue without impartial investigation. It will not do to take anything for granted, on either side of a question, which is a matter of legitimate controversy; and no man can know the truth with a partisan spirit which desires to know only one side of a question even when investigated. Such a spirit, in the search-light of the Nineteenth Century, is unworthy the claim of intelligence and manhood; and the mercenary or demagogical spirit which allies itself to either side of a contention like this in order to secure profit or position, is simply diabolical. There was a time when ecclesiastical anathema and magisterial edict could throttle investigation and terrify conscience; but we have reached an age of learning and liberty, in which Truth courts investigation, and in which old errors are dragged up by their hoary locks from the deep of past traditions and superstitions, and subjected to the scalpel of historic and scientific methods of inquiry. The spirit of intolerance and bigotry is not dead; but their sword is in the scabbard and their torch is extinguished so far as the horrors of physical inquisition are concerned. Baptists, of all other people, ought to thank God; and of all other people, they should not be intolerant of any truth nor of the investigation of any error found in their own position. Let us be true to history as to the Bible; and then let us remember that we are not infallible, and that we have not a monopoly of the true, the beautiful and the good.

The author of this humble production is not wedded to his view of the question at issue. All his biases and predilections have been trained about the "succession" ideal; and only in the light of later investigation have his convictions changed. He follows his conscientious conclusions under the guidance of God's Spirit and the truth of history as he sees it; and he feels certain that time will vindicate Dr. Whitsitt's thesis and those who agree with him in this dark hour of obloquy and opposition. Dr. Whitsitt has done a great service to the truth of Baptist history and to the true Baptist position, which can only be injured by

traditional fictions; and it has been the pleasure of the author to contribute his humble part in defense of Dr. Whitsitt's theory already established, independent of the Crosby or other arguments here brought forward.

The author has no fear of injury to Baptist position at the hands of Pedobaptists, or others, who seek to pervert Dr. Whitsitt's thesis as an anti-immersion argument. Dr. Whitsitt is thoroughly sound upon every article of Baptist faith and practice; and all he means by the "*introduction*" of immersion (1641) in England, by the Baptists, is the "*restoration*" of the ordinance, as Crosby states it, after its "disuse" for a period among the Anabaptists both on the Continent and in England. For this fact he has unquestioned authority; and while Baptists may regret that there was ever a gap in the practice of their heroic ancestors, they are to be congratulated that when the conditions changed they promptly returned to their "ancient practice of immersion," as Crosby, their first historian, declares. The Anabaptists always thoroughly understood with Rothmann, Menno, Busher, Blunt, and all the rest, that immersion only was Scriptural baptism—just as the Catholics and Reformers of the time held—but they fell with the rest under the sprinkling spell of the Sixteenth Century. However, when liberty came with light, they finally returned to their "ancient practice," while the Catholic and Protestant world have lost it forever.

G. A. L.

NASHVILLE, July 28, 1897.

## CHAPTER I.

### NEAL'S STATEMENT.

WITHOUT stopping now to consider the grounds of presumptive evidence upon which Dr. Thomas argues the probability of immersion in England and Holland before 1641, in the first article of his "Review of Dr. Whitsitt's Question," I proceed to notice in that first article (pp. 4, 5) his use of the statement made by Neal in his "History of the Puritans," (4 Vols., 1732-38) to the effect that Jesse laid the "foundation" of the "first Baptist congregation," in 1641, which he had met with in England, "thus anticipating Dr. Whitsitt in his theory by 150 years." I grant the value of long-continued tradition, the concurrent voice of historians and of individual utterances upon any given subject in history; but, in this age of freedom and research in which investigation is no longer trammelled by magisterial nor ecclesiastical authority, the scientific method of dealing with facts has dispelled the illusions of a multitude of traditions and long-believed utterances along all the lines of so-called history. I grant the strength of all the prior presumptions raised by Dr. Thomas against what he calls Dr. Whitsitt's "wide and drastic negative;" but the only way out of the difficulties suggested is to get at the facts in the case, the best we can, and let the presumptions take care of themselves, if they are to the contrary. There is scarcely a probable fact in history that may not be obscured by plausible traditions and utterances which raise presumptions to the contrary.

Although Crosby, in his "History of the Baptists," (4 Vols., 1738-40) mildly characterizes Neal's state-

ment as a "strange representation," (Vol. III., p.41) a statement which he did not seem to "understand," yet, seven years before, he had furnished Neal the very data upon which he made his statement. Referring to "a manuscript of Mr. William Kiffin" (Vol. I., p. 148) which he says he "lent Mr. Neal," Crosby claims that, according to that document, there were three other Baptist churches formed, respectively, in 1633, 1638, 1639, "before that of Mr. Jessey's." These churches, according to Crosby, (Vol. I., p. 147) were composed of "Baptists who had hitherto been intermixed among other Protestant Dissenters, without distinction . . . who now began to separate themselves and form distinct societies of those of their own persuasion." The "first" of these, he says, seceded in 1633, from the Jacob Lathrop (Congregational) church under Spilsbury; the second from the same church, in 1638, which also joined Spilsbury; the third was formed 1639, at Crutched Friars under Green, Hobson and Spencer. (Vol. I., p. 147-149; Vol. III., pp. 41, 42.)\*

With this data before Neal, Crosby seems not to "understand" his "strange representation" that "Mr. Jessey laid the *foundation* of the first Baptist congregation that he (Neal) had met with in England." The truth must be that Crosby, in his apparent puzzle at Neal's statement has only the organization, but not the baptism of these two churches in his mind; for without reference to the mode of baptism, Crosby regards these churches as "Baptist" before the restoration of the "ancient practice of immersion" by the "Baptists of England," as recorded by him (Vol. I., p. 96-107) at the time of

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\*Evidently there is some mistake about the secession of 1638, being a church, since it joined Mr. Spilsbury, who at this time, was pastor of the church which seceded in 1633. Sam Eaton, who went out with the secession of 1633, is mentioned with others in the Jessey Records as having been baptized by Spilsbury (Gould, "Open Communion," p. cxxii). This fact identifies the secession of 1638 with that of 1633. So it would appear that there were only two churches before that of Mr. Jessey's, prior to 1641, namely, the 1633 and 1639 organizations.

Blunt's deputation to Holland, 1640. The "Baptists" who formed these two churches, 1633-38, and 1639, came out individually from among the Pedobaptist churches with which, according to Crosby, they were "intermixed;" and although "most, or all of them," when they seceded from their Congregational brethren, "received a new baptism"—that is, believers' as distinguished from infant baptism—yet, according to Crosby, it is clear that not until after 1638-9 did they receive immersion as "restored" by the "Baptists of England" in 1641. Crosby calls them "Baptists" while "intermixed" with the "sprinkling" Pedobaptists; and it is more than probable that their mode of baptism, at the time of their separation, was that of their Pedobaptist brethren with whom they had been "intermixed," and from whom they separated, simply and solely on account of their conviction "*that baptism was not to be administered to infants, but to such only as professed faith in Christ.*" (Crosby, Vol. I., p. 148.)

Now it is also clear that Neal was looking at the facts in the case from another standpoint. He was viewing a Baptist church as an *immersed* body. The "manuscript of William Kiffin," which Crosby had furnished him, also put 1641 as the date of restoring immersion as believers' baptism, through Richard Blunt, to the secession which took place in 1640, from the Jessey and the Spilsbury churches; for Blunt was a member of the Spilsbury church, and out of the two churches, evidently another church was formed, the "*foundation*" of which Neal ascribes to Jessey. He saw in the Kiffin Manuscript and other testimony, in 1640-41, a new church founded upon the assumption that baptism "ought to be by dipping"—"*none having then so practiced in England to professed believers.*" He knew from these manuscripts that Blunt, Lucar and others of the "forenamed," who united with some of Jessey's people in the movement, belonged to the Spilsbury



church, and that therefore, Spilsbury's church could not have been an immersion body. Why? Because the "forenamed," as well as those of Jessey's people, would have known the fact; and without such knowledge, the main paragraph of the Kiffin Manuscript—"none having then so practiced in England, etc."--would not have been inserted. So of the other church of 1639—and so if the Helwisse church or churches in and about London—if they had been practicing immersion, such men as Blunt, Lucar, Blacklock, Jessey, Kiffin and the like, would have known something of the fact, and would not have acted upon the presumption that there were "none" in England who then practiced believers' immersion without good reason for the utterance. With all these facts and inferences before him, it was perfectly natural for Neal to conclude that here was the first Baptist, or immersion, church that he had met with in English history.

Neal evidently got his information from the manuscript of William Kiffin, which Crosby had "lent him"—that is, from the second, or 1640-1641 part of that manuscript, only the substance of which Crosby uses (Vol. I., p. 101) in his detail of the restoration of immersion by the Baptists of England through Blunt, 1641. Gould ("Open Communion, etc.," p. cxxiii) gives this same second part of the Kiffin Manuscript in the exact words of the original document, including the dates, 1640-1641, and the main paragraph, "None having then so practiced in England to professed believers," together with all the details of the Blunt movement quoted by Crosby in his substantial use of this same original document; and whether this original 1640-1641 part is the manuscript of William Kiffin, or the records of Jessey or other person, copied by Kiffin, Crosby substantially quotes it from Kiffin, with perfect confidence, just as he did the 1633-1638 part of it. The document as a whole and in both its parts was re-



covered in its original form and sent to Dr. Whitsitt by George Gould, of London, and with much plausibility, Dr. Whitsitt classifies it as the "Jessey Records" with which the Kiffin Manuscript, as substantially used by Crosby, corresponds in both parts.

The first, or 1633-1638 part quoted by Crosby (Vol. I., pp. 147-149) as "an account collected from a manuscript of William Kiffin" is, at least, a substantial version of the Jessey Records. In the margin of page 149, Crosby uses the words, "*Records of that church*" as authority upon which the Kiffin Manuscript, which he was quoting, was evidently based. What "records" are these to which he refers in the margin? No doubt the Jessey Records, which detail the same "account" which he is here collecting from "the manuscript of William Kiffin," and from which Kiffin drew his information; and if the first part of the Kiffin Manuscript was a version of the Jessey Records, it is probable the second part was, also.\*

While, however, Crosby seems to quote *verbatim* the 1633-1638 part of the Kiffin Manuscript (Vol. I., p. 177-149), he seems only to quote *substantially* from the Kiffin Manuscript the 1640-1641 part (Vol. I., p. 101), omitting only the 1641 date of the original document, and paraphrasing the main paragraph, in dealing with the Blunt movement for the restoration of immersion in England in 1641; but while he omitted only the 1641 date and paraphrased the main paragraph of the document, he evidently placed the original Kiffin Manuscript as a whole before Neal for reference, dates, and all. What could Neal do, therefore, but conclude as he did that the

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\*Dr. Thomas speaks of Crosby's having the records of Spilsbury's church (1633-38) and the records of Hubbard's church (1621-1641). Evidently the records of the 1633-38 church, as indicated above were the Jessey Records upon which the Kiffin Manuscript was founded; but the Hubbard church was a Pedobaptist and not a Baptist church, according to Crosby (Vol. I., pp. 162-165) and cuts no figure in this discussion. The only records which Crosby had of any Baptist church before 1641, were those of Jessey or the Kiffin Manuscript.

Jessey Church, or that part of it which joined with the "forenamed" from the Spilsbury Church, laid the "foundation" of the first Baptist Church, as an immersed body, which he had met with in English Baptist history?

I am perfectly satisfied that Crosby knew of the date, 1641, of the Kiffin Manuscript, or of the Jessey or other records of which the Kiffin Manuscript is a version. Why he omitted this date in his substantial version of Kiffin's Manuscript, after quoting the 1640 date, he does not say. It is equally puzzling to know why he paraphrased the main paragraph, which says, "none having then so practiced (immersion) in England to professed believers," so as to read: "Yet they had not, as they knew of, revived the ancient custom of immersion." The Bampfield Document (Review of the Question, p. 232), referring to the same period in which the Baptists adopted several "methods" for the restoration of immersion in England, declares, like the Kiffin Manuscript, that in England the practice of immersion "had been *so long disused* that there were *none* who had been so baptized to be found." Whatever Crosby's motive, however, for his omission of the date, 1641, or for his paraphrase of the main paragraph, he uses the second as he does the first part of the Kiffin Manuscript as his authority for the historical events recorded. As he gives no reason for his omission of the 1641 date in the second part of the manuscript, nor for his paraphrase—and yet uses the document in recording the facts which do not contradict this date, nor vitiate the main paragraph—we may conclude that his omission and paraphrase either have no meaning or are not based upon valid grounds. By using the date 1640 (Vol. III., p. 41) Crosby virtually admits the date 1641, the events of which, according to the manuscript he quotes, follow in the order he gives in full.

It will be noticed that Crosby does not "repudiate"

Neal's statement, as Dr. Thomas says, but only mildly characterizes it as a "strange representation" which he could not "understand"—looking, no doubt, to the formation rather than the baptism which characterized the existence of the three churches which he claimed as "Baptist" before 1641. Again, even if the above probability may not be possible, we know not how far Neal's statement may have actuated Crosby's conservatism in his omission of the date, 1641, and in his paraphrase of the main paragraph of the Kiffin Manuscript. He was greatly offended with Neal's meager and prejudiced account of the Baptists of England; and there was a strong temptation here, without the desire of denying this date, or of changing the sense of the main paragraph, to paralyze by omission or variation the positive statement of Neal, which, in Crosby's view, was erroneous so far as the organization and existence of what he considered Baptist Churches in England was concerned before the year 1641.

But whatever the purpose of Crosby in his omission of the 1641 date, or in his paraphrase of the main paragraph of the Kiffin document, it is certain that he had the date and the paragraph before him in the original form of the manuscript; and in the light of other documents and facts he has recorded the history connected with this date and with this main paragraph which confirm the Kiffin Manuscript as a whole and in both its parts in its original form. He shows that, at a given time, after 1640, immersion was restored through Blunt and others by the "ENGLISH BAPTISTS," according to this Kiffin Manuscript and other historic testimony; and there is absolutely no period, except 1640-'41, at which the event *as described* could have occurred in England, as we shall see hereafter. He gives the date, 1640 (Vol. III., p. 41), according to the Kiffin Manuscript, in which the agitation originated in the Jessey Church and divided it; and then (Vol. I.,

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pp. 101, 102), he details the event which followed the 1640 agitation in the restoration of immersion in 1641, through Blunt, which he declares was one of the methods adopted by the "English Baptists," without distinction, in order to revive the "ancient practice" which "had for some time been disused"—all according to this same Kiffin Manuscript, confirmed by Hutchinson's account.



## CHAPTER II.

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### CROSBY'S ACCOUNT.

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DR. THOMAS (p. 21) affirms that "Crosby, with the Kiffin Manuscript before him, saw no inconsistency in maintaining at the same time that Spilsbury's Church had practiced immersion since its formation in 1633." He assumes also that Crosby's reference to Smyth and Helwisse as "restorers of immersion" implies the existence of immersion in England at an earlier day; and he bases Crosby's authority for the implication upon the validity of "oral tradition" within the limit of one hundred years—the time elapsing between the events narrated and the writing of Crosby's history.

I reply that Crosby, to the contrary, affirms that, prior to the Blunt movement (1640-41) which he records from the Kiffin Manuscript, immersion in England "*had for some time been disused*" (Vol. I., p. 97); and that the Kiffin Manuscript with which Crosby, Hutchinson and the Bampfield Document agree, utterly precludes the probability that Spilsbury's Church practiced immersion before 1640-41. Such men as Blunt, Lucar, Blacklock, Kiffin, Jessey and the like would have known the fact if Spilsbury's Church had so practiced. Blunt and Lucar, at least, were, or had been members of Spilsbury's Church or the secession of 1633, and would themselves have been already immersed if that body had been an immersion church. In either case the statements of the Kiffin Manuscript would never have been made that Blunt and those with him became "convinced" that baptism "ought to be by dipping" and administered only to believers,

and that “*none* had then so practiced to professed believers in England.”

Again, Crosby (Vol. I., p. 99, 100) positively repudiates the baptism of Smyth which was, of course, the baptism of Helwisse, whom Crosby says (Vol. I., p. 269) Smyth baptized; and he affirms that the “English Baptists” did not “approve of” nor “receive their baptism from Smyth.” Crosby regarded Smyth and Helwisse as “restorers of immersion” in Holland; and in the absence of Smyth’s writings he doubted that Smyth baptized himself, as was charged upon him by Ainsworth, Johnson, Clifton, and others in his own lifetime. Hence, Crosby followed only one-half of the “oral tradition” in the case, holding, contrary to the facts of later history, to the probability that Smyth was baptized by immersion; but he gives to the “English Baptists” the benefit of the doubt as to his self-baptism, as charged—the other half of the “oral tradition”—and he emphasizes the fact that his baptism, whatever the mode, never succeeded to them. (Vol. I., p. 100). This excludes the succession of Smyth’s baptism to the English Baptists through Helwisse and the Helwisse Church whom Smyth baptized; but, as we shall see further on, the better reason will appear in the fact that Smyth’s self-baptism was affusion, and not immersion, and that there were no “immersing churches” at this early date in England. The plain historical fact recorded by Crosby is that the “English Baptists,” as he designates them, restored immersion at a later date by “*two other methods.*”

Crosby says (Vol. I., p. 100): “The two other methods that I mentioned were indeed both taken by the Baptists *at their revival of immersion in England*, as I find it acknowledged and justified in their writings.”

The first of these two methods was that of sending Blunt to Holland for immersion by a regular



administrator, as shown by Hutchinson and Kiffin, and which occurred 1640-41, and as recorded by Crosby with the latter date only omitted. (Vol. I., pp. 100, 102.) The last of these two methods, following the first, Crosby proceeds to show (Vol. I., pp. 103-107), was that of Spilsbury, Tombes, Laurence and others who held that an unbaptized administrator could restore baptism when lost; and he says: "The greatest number of the English Baptists, and the more judicious, looked upon all this as needless trouble (sending to Holland for immersion) and what proceeded from the old Popish doctrine (of succession). They [1] *affirmed*, therefore, (the greatest number and the more judicious Baptists) and [2] *practiced accordingly*, that after a general corruption of baptism, an unbaptized person might warrantably baptize, and so begin a reformation." If this method had been the practice of the Baptists of England at an "earlier date," Crosby would have here referred it to an earlier date and changed the order of its mention; and he and the writers whom he quotes against the Blunt method as "needless trouble" and after the doctrine of Popish "succession," would have quoted the fact as past authority for present practice.

The Bampfield Document (No. 18 of the Collection of 1712) which was doubtless in the hands of Crosby and which was written after 1681, details very clearly the Spilsbury method of restoring immersion when it was lost in England; and while it does not mention the Blunt method, it shows that Smyth was not a restorer of immersion in England, and that his se-baptism method, though attempted at the time of the restoration, was repudiated and went to nothing. The only question of importance right here is to determine as to the possible date when the Spilsbury method of restoring immersion by an "unbaptized administrator" began. According to Kiffin and Neal, the Blunt method, which the great body

of English Baptists also repudiated, was adopted in 1641, and hence Neal's suggestion that the Church adopting this method was the first immersion congregation found in English Baptist history. Crosby, chronologically, in the order of his narrative, puts the adoption of the Blunt method first and the Spilsbury method second; and after showing that the greatest number and the more judicious of the English Baptists repudiated the Blunt method he shows that they "*affirmed and practiced accordingly* that after a *general corruption* of baptism, an unbaptized person might warrantably baptize, and so *begin a reformation.*" Before this, Crosby says that the "two methods," with reference to the same period of time, "were indeed both taken by the *Baptists* at *their* revival of immersion in England," and while the Blunt method has the precedence in the order of time, the Spilsbury method must have followed at about the same time, 1640-41. Any other conclusion would do violence to the connected and consistent order of Crosby's narrative.

That both the Helwisse and Spilsbury Baptists of England practiced affusion before Blunt restored immersion (1640-41) is also clearly probable according to Dr. Evans in his *History of the Early English Baptists*. (Vols. I., II., 1864.) Besides showing, according to Dr. Muller, of Amsterdam, that Smyth and his followers were by their own confession "*self-baptized*" (Vol. I., p. 209), he shows also, according to the same authority, that the Smyth schism from the Helwisse body was received by the Mennonite Waterlanders who were Arminians and affusionists and who, after examining "their doctrine of salvation and the *ground* and *form* of their baptism," said: "No difference was found between them and us." (Ibid p. 208.) The conclusion is that Smyth, Helwisse and company were all affusionists and not immersionists. Dr. Muller himself says (Evans I., p. 223) that those of the Smyth fac-



tion who had not yet been baptized, as it appeared to him, were admitted to the Waterlanders by sprinkling and not immersion. "But," says he, "they (the Waterlanders) cared only for the very *nature* of baptism, and were therefore willing to admit even those who were baptized by a mode differing from theirs, just as we are wanted to do now-a-days." Dr. Thomas (VII., p. 54) seems to think here that Muller implies that among the Netherlanders immersion, though not ordinarily practiced, was not wholly rejected, and would not have been regarded as a material difference in "form and foundation" with sprinkling; but even if this were true, which is not probable, it is evident here that Muller has no reference to the mode of Smyth's baptism which was found, upon examination, to be the same in "*form and foundation*" with the *affusion* of the Waterlanders. He was evidently self-baptized and that by affusion.

Again, Dr. Evans (Vol. II., pp. 52, 53) admits the conclusion, "more than warranted," that there was nothing in the controversial writings of Smyth and Helwisse to warrant the supposition that they regarded immersion as the proper and only mode of baptism; and he (Evans) maintains the probability that up to the time of Blunt's deputation to Holland in order to secure immersion, both the General and Particular Baptists of England retained the custom of their Dutch brethren in the practice of affusion. Evans points out in proof of the fact, the case of the "Old Men, or *Aspersi*," and the "New Men, or *Immersi*," at Chelmsford, 1646. Even at that period he says (Vol. II., p. 79): "Most will see that the practice of the Mennonite brethren (affusion) was common in this country (England). These 'New Men' (or *Immersi*) soon cast them (the 'Old Men,' or *Aspersi*) in the shade, and their practice became obsolete. Immersion, as the mode of baptism, became the rule with both sections of the Baptist community. Indeed from this time (1646), be-

yond the fact already given (at Chelmsford), we know not of a solitary exception."

Thus Crosby's Account of the restoration of immersion by the Baptists of England by the "two methods" described—which evidently took place, 1640–41, according to the Kiffin Manuscript and affirmed by Neal—is here confirmed by Evans, who is a conservative, careful, accurate and unpartizan Baptist historian and who wrote in 1864.

In his review of my book in the *Western Recorder*, Dr. Thomas cites Crosby (Vol. I., p. 99) to show a "reformation of baptism," in which Helwisse and Morton joined with Smyth, whom Crosby refers to as "restorers of immersion" in that "latter age," from all of which he (Dr. Thomas) infers an "immersing church in England," as we have already seen, at an "earlier date" than the Kiffin Manuscript ascribes. This "reformation of baptism," whatever its mode or manner of introduction, took place in Holland, and long before Helwisse and Morton with their church came back to England in 1611; and this "reformation," as we have further seen, does not imply an "immersing church in England" at an early date, unless it can be proved that Smyth's baptism was immersion, which is wholly improbable and which, if it was, Crosby repudiates as never having succeeded to the "English Baptists," confirmed by the Bampfield Document.

Smyth and Helwisse, in originating their "reformation of baptism" in Holland simply broke with "infant baptism," and set up the Scriptural practice of "believers' baptism;" and although the Dutch Anabaptists practiced the same by affusion, yet Smyth originated believers' baptism by self-affusion, "supposing there was no true *administrator* to be found." His opponents—such men as Ainsworth, Johnson, Robinson, Clifton, Jessop and others—charged him, in his own lifetime, with his self-baptism, which he never denied, but rather defended; but it was in later times that the tradition

of his immersion originated. Even Dr. Wall calls him the "beginner of baptism by dipping," and he says of him again: "Being more desperately wicked than others, he baptized himself and then baptized others, and from this man, the English Baptists have successively received their new administration of baptism." (Plain Discovery, p. 44.) Dr. Wall also follows another false tradition, that Spilsbury went to Holland to be baptized of Smyth, when Smyth had long been dead before Spilsbury's church came into existence; and it was from such "oral traditions" that the Pedobaptists charged upon the Baptists of England that their succession in baptism was derived from "*Smyth and his disciples.*" Crosby says (Vol. I., p. 95) that the Pedobaptists made "great improvement" of this *supposed* fact, and tried from hence to "render all the baptizings among the English Baptists to be invalid, *supposing* them to be his successors, and that he was the first administrator of it among them."

Whatever Crosby's opinion as to the mode of Smyth's baptism, or as to its self-origination, he proceeds in the following pages to repudiate the "oral tradition" of Wall and others that this baptism succeeded to the English Baptists. Turning to the period when Blunt introduced immersion in England by succession, and to the method by which the Anti-successionists followed in the same movement, he says, after touching upon the Pedobaptist argument "against the reviving of the practice of immersion" which had for some time been disused: "I do not find any Englishman among the first restorers of immersion in this latter age accused of baptizing himself, but only the said John Smyth, and there is ground to question the truth of that also. . . . But enough of this. If he were guilty of what they charge him with, 'tis no blemish on English Baptists, who neither approved of any such method, nor did they receive their baptism from him." (Vol. I., pp. 97-100.)

### CHAPTER III.

WILLIAM KIFFIN.

ON page 22 (Art. II.) Dr. Thomas asserts that William Kiffin left Spilsbury's Church, according to Ivimey, "near 1640," because of the occupancy of his (Spilsbury's) pulpit by an unimmersed minister; and that this was the "occasion" of the foundation of the Devonshire Square Baptist Church in London, "near 1640" by William Kiffin. "How could he," asks Dr. Thomas, "about 1640 have led a secession because of so exalted a conception of the necessity of immersion, and at a later date have declared that, in 1641, immersion was unknown in England?" As we shall presently see, no such question, according to the history of that period, was ever sprung before 1640-'41, if ever, among the Baptists of England. This was one of the mistakes for which Ivimey is famous in the history of that time, and in which he here misplaces the date of a fact stated by Crosby which occurred after 1644-45, and not before or "near 1640." In his criticism of my book, "A Review of the Question," in the *Western Recorder*, Dr. Thomas claimed that I erred in parenthetically classing Kiffin as of Blunt's "persuasion" (in Crosby's Account) before any mention of Blunt had been made; and because, while Blunt was a successionist, Kiffin belonged to the flock of Spilsbury, who repudiated succession—adding also that Kiffin joined Spilsbury's congregation in 1638, and that it is "no answer to say that Crosby is mistaken in placing Kiffin's secession with Spilsbury."

According to Kiffin's own statement (Ivimey II., p. 297; Orme's *Life of Kiffin*, p. 14), he claims that

in 1638, when 22 years of age, he joined an Independent Church, not Spilsbury's, as the sequel shows. Orme (*ibid.* p. 115, Note XXI.), says of Mr. Jessey: "He was pastor of the Independent Church of which Kiffin was a member, and changed his sentiments some time after Kiffin left it." In 1643 (*ibid.* p. 22), after a return from Holland, Kiffin quit business, for the time, and devoted himself to the "study of God's word," being "greatly pressed," he says, "by the people with whom I was a *member* (not *pastor*) to continue with them"—evidently meaning the Jessey people with whom he was associated. With Hansered Knollys, 1643, he seems still to have been a member of the Jessey Church when the question arose about the baptism of Knollys' child (Gould, Open Communion, p. cxxix) in the "Conference" in which Kiffin was "one of those who were concerned," and the "issue whereof was the conviction of sixteen members against Pedobaptism" and their withdrawal from the Jessey Church. Kiffin, according to Gould (p. cxxx), was probably among the number who withdrew; and, if so, he was still "counted as one" of the Church in 1644, since none of the sixteen were excluded down to May of that year. Crosby (Vol. III., p. 4), alludes to this same "Conference" of 1643, and mentions the fact that Kiffin was "one of those concerned" in it; and he immediately adds that Kiffin "joined himself to the church of Mr. John Spilsbury; but a difference arising about permitting persons to preach amongst them that had not been baptized by immersion, they parted by consent, yet kept good correspondence." Some time, then, in 1643, Kiffin withdrew from Jessey, and afterwards joined Spilsbury; and after that he withdrew from Spilsbury for the reason expressed by Crosby above—if, indeed, such an event ever happened.

Both Crosby and Ivimey err, however, in placing Kiffin with Spilsbury in 1638; and Ivimey makes an-

other mistake (Vol. II., p. 297) in assigning 1638 as the date of Kiffin's secession from Jessey and union with Spilsbury. Worse still, he errs, by his own confession, when he says that "soon after 1640, as it is *supposed*," the Devonshire Square Church was founded, and Kiffin became pastor. According to Gould (*Open Communion*, p. cxxxii) Ivimey, (*Life of Kiffin*, p. 17), corrects his mistake, latterly, wherein he says: "About the year 1653, he (Kiffin) left Mr. Spilsbury, and became the pastor of the Baptist church which for many years met in Fisher's Folly, now Devonshire Square." "This," says Gould, "is the latest form in which Mr. Ivimey has stated his conclusion as to the date of the formation of this church. In 1814, when he published Vol. II. of his *History of the English Baptists*, he '*supposed*' that it was founded soon after 1640 (p. 297). Of course his supposition was incorrect, as Kiffin was not a Baptist at that date."

Dr. Thomas claims that Kiffin was pastor of the Devonshire Square Church in 1644, when the seven churches of London issued the Confession of that date; but his man, Ivimey (Vol. II., p. 296), has Mr. Keach, and not Kiffin, pastor of that church at that time! Alas! for Ivimey!

Gould, however (*Open Communion*, p. cxxxii), holds that even Ivimey's *later* view (*Life of Kiffin*, p. 17), is probably wrong, and that Kiffin moved to Devonshire Square with his congregation after 1653. He infers the fact from the "return made to Archbishop Sheldon by the Bishop of London, in 1669, of the Conventicles in the Diocese of London," in which is found no mention of Fisher's Folly or Devonshire Square; and the only entry in the "return" in relation to Kiffin is that he was "preacher" or "teacher" in "Finsbury Court, over against the artillery ground in Morefield"—or Bunhill Field. If, according to Ivimey, Kiffin was not pastor of Devonshire Square Church in 1644 (nor founded it



in 1640), he may still be mistaken as to 1653. From certain data, Gould thinks that Kiffin, after leaving Jessey, 1643, and after a short connection with Spilsbury, united with Patient in another organization which was one of the "seven" churches which issued the "Confession" of 1644, at the top of the list of the signers of which are found the names of Kiffin and Patient; and that, many years afterward, Kiffin removed with his church to Devonshire Square. He speaks of the history of the church as traditional, and says that the "original records" of the church "are lost" (p. cxxxi); and if we are to judge from the conflicting accounts of Ivimey, its early history must be a matter of tradition.

At all events, the probability is that Kiffin never became a Baptist until 1641. Gould logically draws this conclusion, (Close Communion, pp. cxxvii., cxxviii., cxxix.), from Kiffin's "Sober Discourse of Right to Church Communion," . . . London, 1681, in which he says: "I used all endeavors . . . that "I might be directed in a right way to worship; and "after some time concluded that the safest way was "to follow the footsteps of the flock, namely, that "order laid down by Christ and his apostles, and "practiced by the primitive Christians in their times, "which I found to be that, after conversion, they "were baptized, and added to the church, and con- "tinued in the Apostles' doctrine, fellowship, break- "ing of bread and prayer, according to which I "thought myself conformable, and have continued "in the profession of the same *for these forty years.*" "Forty years," subtracted from 1681, the year in which he wrote his "Sober Discourse," leaves 1641, the year in which Kiffin became a Baptist. According to Crosby (Vol. I., p. 310), this was the year (1641) in which "a much greater number" than before withdrew from Mr. Jessey's church of which Kiffin was then a member, and were baptized, according to the Kiffin Manuscript, by Blunt and Black-

lock; and although Kiffin's name does not appear among the fifty-three baptized in January of that year, he may have been baptized among the number immersed in the latter part of this year, or afterwards. At all events, in 1642, we find him in a dispute with Dr. Featley, as a full-fledged Baptist—probably still remaining with Jessey 'till 1643.

The history of Kiffin, then, so far as it can be gleaned in its connection with the Blunt movement, accords with the facts of his own manuscript, with the exception that he did not unite with Spilsbury in 1638. The Jessey Records, of which the Kiffin Manuscript is evidently a version, gives the names of Thomas Wilson and others who are represented in the Kiffin Manuscript, as being dismissed with William Kiffin; but the name of Kiffin is properly left out of the Jessey Records of 1638; and this accords with the facts of history, namely, that in 1638, according to Kiffin's own statement (Ivimey, Vol. II., p. 297; Orme, p. 115), he joined an Independent church, which proves to be Jessey's instead of Spilsbury's. How the mistake occurs in the Kiffin Manuscript we do not know; but the Jessey Records on this point correct the mistake and conform to the facts of Kiffin's history in connection with the Blunt movement. The truth is that, as Crosby says, Kiffin, "who lived in those times," was "a leader among those of that persuasion"—that is, of the Blunt "persuasion;" and may have been baptized by Blunt or Blacklock, upon his conversion to Baptist principles in the latter part of 1641. He was, in other words, a successionist; and in course of time he became a regular "Landmark Baptist" of the modern type—not only a close communionist, but opposed to pulpit affiliation with Pedobaptists—that is, according to Crosby, (Vol. III., p. 4), which seems to be traditional.

To be sure, as Dr. Thomas says, Spilsbury was an anti-successionist, and so perhaps of most of his



church; but it is clear that Blunt, Lucar and others of the "forenamed" of that church were successionists and joined with the greater secession from Jessey's church in the restoration of immersion in 1640-41, through a legitimate administrator secured by Blunt from Holland. Spilsbury, while not baptized himself, in 1638, baptized Sam Eaton and others upon his anti-succession theory, that "baptizedness is not essential to the administrator;" but according to Spilsbury, himself, there were some who "scrupled the correctness" of his conduct. This was before 1640-1641, when Spilsbury's baptism was only believers' affusion; but it is evident that the dissatisfaction of some as to his right of administration was at the bottom of the restoration movement in 1640, which secured immersion through a successionist administrator in 1641. It is likely that such men of his flock as Blunt, Lucar and others, were the objectors who soon after, are found in conference and prayer with some of Jessey's church over the matter of baptism, "that it ought to be by dipping," and how to "enjoy it," through a proper administrator, according to the Jessey Records or the Kiffin Manuscript. I also infer this dissatisfaction and agitation as growing out of the Spilsbury theory and practice and leading up to the succession movement, from Hutchinson's "Treatise Concerning the Covenant and Baptism," in which he says: "The great objection was the want of an administrator, which, as I have heard, was removed by sending certain messengers to Holland, whence they were supplied;" and Crosby appeals for confirmation of Hutchinson's declaration to the Kiffin Manuscript, which more fully details the matter. (Vol. I., p. 100-102). The movement of 1640-41, evidently originated in Spilsbury's church by those "persons" who first "scrupled the correctness" of Spilsbury's theory and practice of baptism by an unbaptized administrator; and in the discussion of

the proper administrator, the proper mode of baptism by immersion became the leading feature of the movement.

It is also true, as Dr. Thomas suggests, that Mr. Jessey, who joined in the movement of 1640-1641, upon his conviction with Blunt and the rest, that "baptism ought to be by dipping," was a Pedobaptist and was not immersed until 1645; but this does not preclude the fact that he took part in the agitation and movement which restored immersion in 1641; and what is claimed of him by Neal as having laid the "*foundation*" of the first Baptist congregation which he had met with in England, may only apply to the secession from his church which joined with Blunt, Lucar and the rest of the "forenamed" from the Spilsbury church, which constituted this first immersion or Baptist Church in England. No doubt the larger number who united in the movement were from the Jessey church; and this larger secession from Jessey could be properly called the "*foundation*" of the first immersion church—and so ascribed to Jessey by preëminence on account of his prominence as a leader with Blunt in the original agitation which led to the movement in 1641. Why Jessey did not end up with the movement in 1641, is singular; but it must be remembered that, though he finally became a Baptist in practice, 1645, he was always on the fence of the mixed-church order of Baptists, and he may be said to be the father of the open communion idea in the Baptist denomination. While he was convinced with Blunt and the rest that immersion was the proper mode of baptism, his convictions were not of that uncompromising character which led Blunt, Lucar, Blacklock, Kiffin and others immediately, upon the adoption of Baptist principles to enter upon Baptist practice; and while Jessey seems to have gotten the credit of laying the "*foundation*" of the first immersion Baptist Church in England, it was Blunt

who deserves the honor, and of whose church, in 1646, Edwards in his *Gangraena*, speaks as "one of the first and prime churches of the Anabaptists in these later times."

Another singular fact is that Kiffin seems to have remained with Jessey until 1643-4, when he withdrew from his church on account of the controversy about infant baptism by which, finally, "Jessey and the greater part of his church were proselyted to the opinion and practice of the Anti-pedobaptists" (Crosby, Vol. III., p. 4; Gould, "Open Communion," p. cxxx). It was not until his separation from Spilsbury, whenever that was, that we discover Kiffin's stricter orthodoxy as a close communionist and anti-affiliationist. Even then he did not break with Spilsbury and his church in fellowship; and perhaps this state of liberality and leniency explains why Kiffin, before he grew into stricter views, remained with Jessey down to 1643. Jessey was not only a Pedobaptist, though an immersionist from 1641-2 to 1644-5, but as a professed Baptist from 1645 onward, he retained, all his life, persons sprinkled in infancy in his church membership.

Nevertheless, at this period, we find considerable correspondence among the Baptist churches of England, which shows that they did not break with the Jessey church. In fact, it seems that from 1641 to 1645, though Jessey had not abandoned infant baptism, nor been immersed himself, he and his church were regarded as Baptists—apparently in transition. Even after 1645 when Jessey had followed the convictions of 1641, his practice as a Baptist did not differ far from his practice as a Pedobaptist between those dates. Crosby seems to regard Jessey's church as Baptist from 1641 onward, when (Vol. III., p. 42) in reply to Neal he says: "Thus it appears, there were three Baptist Churches in England which Mr. Neal met with before *that of Mr. Jessey's.*" But for the several secessions from Jessey's church from

1641 to 1643, it might be inferred that the Blunt movement remained with Jessey, as Kiffin did, to 1643; but with the "forenamed" from Spilsbury's church, it would seem that the secessions from Jessey formed the Blunt church, of which Edwards, in *Gangraena* speaks in 1646. There is, however, some obscurity on this point.



## CHAPTER IV.

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### THE KIFFIN MANUSCRIPT.

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**B**EFORE entering upon the discussion of this subject, and for the benefit of the reader, I will here give the several documents used in this discussion, as found in the collection of 1710-11 and sent to Dr. Whitsitt by Geo. Gould as transcribed as follows:

#### THE JESSEY CHURCH RECORDS.

There having been much discussing, these denying Truth of ye Parish Churches, & ye Church become now so large yt it might be prejudicial, these following desired dismission that they might become an Entire Church & further ye Communion of those Churches in Order amongst themselves, wch at last was granted to them & performed Sept. 12, 1633, viz: Henry Parker & Wife Widd Fearne. . . . Hatmaker Marke Luker, Mr. Wilson Mary Wilson Thos. Allen Jo: Milburn. To these joynd Rich. Blunt, Thos. Hubert, Rich: Tredwell & his wife Kath: John Trimber, William Jennings & Sam Eaton, Mary Greenway, Mr Eaton with some others receiving a further baptism.

Others joynd to them.

1638. These also being of the same judgment with Sam Eaton and desiring to depart and not be censured, our interest in them was remitted with Prayer made in their behalfe June 8th 1638. They having first forsaken Us & joynd with Mr. Spilsbury, viz Mr Peter Ferrer Hen Pen Tho: Wilson Wm Batty Mrs Allen (died 1639) Mrs Norwood.

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#### ORIGINAL KIFFIN MANUSCRIPT.

1633. Sundry of ye Church whereof Mr Jacob and Mr John Lathrop had been pastors, being dissatisfyed with ye Churches owning of English Parishes, to the true Churches desired dismission & joynd together among themselves, as Mr Henry Parker, Mr. Tho Shepard, Mr. Sam Eaton, Marke Luker, & others, with whom joynd Mr. Wm Kiffin.

1638. Mr Thomas Wilson, Mr. Pen, & H. Pen, & 3 more being convinced that Baptism was not for infants, but professed Believers joyned with Mr Jo Spilsbury, ye Churches favor being desired therein.

1640. 3d Mo: The Church became two by mutual consent just half being with Mr. P. Barebone, & ye other halfe with Mr H Jessey. Mr Richard Blunt with him being convinced of Baptism yt also ought to be by dipping in ye Body into ye Water, resembling Burial & rising again. 2 Col. 2. 12. Rom. 6. 4 had sober conference about in ye Church, & then with some of the forenamed who also ware so convinced. And after Prayer & Conference about their so enjoying it, *none having then so practiced in England to professed believers* & hearing that some in ye Netherlands had *so practiced* they agreed and sent over Mr. Rich. Blunt (who understood Dutch) with letters of Commendation, and who was kindly accepted there, & returned with letters from them Jo: Batte a Teacher there and from that Church to such as sent him.

1641. They proceed therein, viz Those Persons that ware persuaded that Baptism should be by dipping ye Body had mett in two Companies, and did intend to meet after this. all these agreed to proceed alike together And then Manifesting (not by any formal Words a Covenant) which word was scrupled by some of them, but by mutual desires and agreement each testified:

Those two Companies did set apart one to Baptize the rest; & so it was solemnly performed by them.

Mr Blunt baptized Mr Blacklock yt was a Teacher amongst them & Mr Blunt being baptized, he & Mr Blacklock Baptized ye rest of their friends that ware so minded, & many being added to them they increased much.

“The names of all 11 Mo. Janu: begin etc.” A list of forty-one names, to which twelve were added January 9, making fifty-three in all as follows: &c.

“1639. Mr Green wth Captn Spencer had begun a Congregation in Crutched Fryars, to whom Paul Hobson joyned who was now with many of that Church one of ye seven.”

I omit here the 1644 part of this Manuscript which mentions the union of the seven churches which issued the Confession of Faith in that year, as not bearing upon the subject at issue.

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#### SUBSTANCE OF THE KIFFIN MANUSCRIPT AS USED BY CROSBY.

There was a congregation of Protestant Dissenters of the independent Persuasion in London, gathered in the year



1616, whereof Mr. Henry Jacob was the first pastor; and after him succeeded Mr. John Lathrop, who was their minister at this time. In this society several persons finding that the congregations kept not their first principles of separation, and being also convinced that baptism was not to be administered to infants, but such only as professed faith in Christ, desired that they might be dismissed from that communion, and allowed to form a distinct congregation in such order as was most agreeable to their own sentiments.

The church considering that they were now grown very numerous, and so more than could in these times of persecution conveniently meet together, and believing also that those persons acted from a principle of conscience, and not obstinacy, agreed to allow them the liberty they desired, and that they should be constituted a distinct church; which was performed the 12th of September, 1633. And as they believed that baptism was not rightly administered to infants, so they looked upon the baptism they had received in that age as invalid: whereupon *most or all of them* received a *new baptism*. Their minister was Mr. John Spilsbury. What number they were is uncertain, because of the mentioning of the names of about twenty men and women it is added, *with divers others*.

In the year 1638 Mr. William Kiffin, Mr. Thomas Wilson, and others being of the same judgment, were upon their request, dismissed to the said Mr. Spilsbury's congregation.

In the year 1639 another congregation of Baptists was formed, whose place of meeting was in Crutched-Fryars; the chief promoters of which were Mr. Green, Mr. Paul Hobson and Captain Spencer. (Crosby, Vol. I., pp. 148-49.)

For in the year 1640 this church became two by consent; just half, says the Manuscript, being with Mr. P. Barebone, and the other half with Mr. Henry Jessey. (Crosby, Vol. III., p. 41.)

Several sober and pious persons belonging to the congregations of the dissenters about London were convinced that *believers* were the only proper subjects of baptism and that it ought to be administered by immersion or dipping the whole body into the water, in resemblance of a burial and resurrection, according to Colos. ii. 12 and Rom. vi. 4. That they often met together to pray and confer about this matter and to consult what methods they should take to enjoy this ordinance in its primitive purity; that they could not be satisfied about any administrator in England, to begin this practice; because *tho' some in this nation rejected the baptism of infants, yet they had not as they knew of revived the ancient custom of immersion*: But, hearing that some in the Netherlands practiced it, they agreed to send

over one Mr. Richard Blunt, who understood the Dutch language; That he went accordingly, carrying letters of recommendation with him, and was kindly received both by the church there and Mr. John Batten, their teacher.

That, upon his return, he baptized Mr. Samuel Blacklock, a minister, and these two baptized the rest of their company [whose names are in the Manuscript to the number of fifty-three]. (Crosby, Vol. I., pp. 101-2.)

Dr. Thomas, in his interpretation of the Kiffin Manuscript, does not speak dogmatically. He does not pronounce the document a "forgery" or a "fraud." After subjecting the document, as a lawyer, to all the severest tests of evidential validity, according to the strictest demands of "authenticity, pertinence, clearness, and authoritativeness," applicable to a genuine or official record in court, he claims only a "modified conception of the significance of the paragraph in question," around which hangs the controversy. He makes no "pretense to infallibility, and admits that his conception may be vulnerable." While he thinks that Dr. Whitsitt is "*certainly not right*" in his construction of the document in general, and of the main paragraph in particular, he says of his own interpretation that it is "*not certainly right.*" He concludes (Art. III., p. 27): "Perhaps no safe solution has been reached by anybody, or is possible. In that case the testimony remains ambiguous and its force is neutralized." The criticism of Dr. Thomas, on this point, is the most scholarly and generous, from an adverse standpoint, which has characterized this contention; and he well says, to the shame of many others: "It would be indecorous, not to say silly, to affect to treat as insignificant the formidable array of testimony which has convinced so discriminating a judge as Dr. Whitsitt, to say nothing of the later concurrence of careful and competent investigators, such as Professors Neuman and Vedder." Only a scholar and a gentleman can thus judge.

While in the main I agree with Dr. Thomas as



regards the rigid principles upon which he subjects the Kiffin Manuscript to the tests of documentary evidence, essential to the absolute authenticity of official records, yet if his tests were severely applied to all our historical testimony, much of our history—especially Baptist history—would be wanting. I do not agree with him, however, that the Kiffin Manuscript is devoid of official test. He allows the validity of even “*oral tradition*” (pp. 21, 22), within the hundred years limit allowed by historical critics, with regard to Crosby’s opinion that Smyth and Helwisse were “restorers of immersion;” and yet he would deny the same validity to the Kiffin Manuscript, which is a written document, and which has a far better foundation in fact than that “oral tradition of Smyth’s immersion, which, in the light of later historical evidence, has proven to be affusion. The tradition at the time Crosby wrote was so unsatisfactory, in the absence of Smyth’s writings, that he (Crosby) repudiated Smyth’s baptism and emphasized the fact that it was never received by the English Baptists; but he uses the Kiffin Manuscript, with perfect reliance upon it as a genuine document, both as to its 1633-1638 dates and as to the facts which belong to the 1640-1641 dates. Much of his history of the Baptists of England is referred to this document as authoritative; and if Crosby’s opinion is to be taken as a test of the comparative genuineness of the “oral tradition” of Smyth’s immersion and the Kiffin Manuscript, then Dr. Thomas’ criticism against the latter falls to the ground. He can take Crosby’s use of “oral tradition” in the one case in which the tradition is practically repudiated, but he cannot take Crosby’s use of the Kiffin document upon which he (Crosby) placed full reliance!

Dr. Thomas says that the Kiffin manuscript may be regarded as a “private paper” without the guaranty of a “place of deposit;” but at the time of Crosby

it must have had a place of deposit as it now has, and must have been regarded by him not simply as a private paper, but as a document sufficiently authenticated to be used as history, and so of those who followed him in the chronicles of the English Baptists.\* As to the facts which belong to the 1640-1641 dates found in the Kiffin manuscript, Crosby confirms his use of the document as authoritative by the parallel use of Hutchinson on the same subject as contemporary support; and Dr. Whitsitt's critics, so far as I have seen, do not controvert Crosby's use of Kiffin's manuscript as to the 1633-1638 dates, which when taken together with the 1640-1641 dates, confirm the authority of the document as a whole. Dr. Thomas says that the Kiffin manuscript "describes only past but not contemporaneous events," which robs it of one of the elements of authenticity; but this is as true of the 1633-1638 part as of the 1640-1641 part of the document; and if it should be invalidated by the rule of Dr. Thomas, we should not only be robbed of the Jessey-Blunt movement of 1640-1641, but of the Spilsbury movement 1633-1638, which none of the critics dispute. Crosby certainly ignored Dr. Thomas' ruling and endorsed the document in both its parts, confirming the second part by the contemporary authority of Hutchinson; and he found the document as a whole in the collection of 1712, which gave it at least a quasi "place of deposit." More than this, Kiffin must have been contemporary with the collector, Mr. Stinton, some time in life. The Kiffin manuscript is good probable evidence; and if Dr. Thomas' rule was applied to all our

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\*The Kiffin manuscript evidently belonged to the collection called: "A Repository of Divers Historical Matters relating to the English Antipedobaptists. Collected from Original Papers or Faithful Extracts. Anno 1712." The collector of the greater part of the materials from which Crosby wrote his history was Mr. Benjamin Stinton (Crosby, Vol. I, page i, Preface); and it is probable that he received the Jessey Records from Mr. Adams when he began to make his collection in 1710-11. Stinton who intended to write the first Baptist history, was evidently the collector of the entire "Repository" mentioned above.

documentary evidence, from this standpoint, it would destroy most of the probable testimony by which much of our received historical data is authoritatively established.

Again, Dr. Thomas says that the "vital sentence" in the Kiffin manuscript "records no corporate fact" legitimate to official notice—that it expresses only a sweeping *opinion*, reducing itself thereby from an official to a personal and seemingly irrelevant utterance." He refers to the sentence: "None having then so practiced in England to professed believers"—a declaration based upon the conviction of Blunt and others that "baptism ought to be by dipping," without the ability of "enjoying it," except by sending to Holland for it, because there was no such practice to professed believers in England. This sentence does record a "corporate fact legitimate to official notice," not an irrelevant personal opinion; and this corporate fact expresses the *reason* why another fact depended upon a possible condition by a logical and relevant connection of the vital sentence with what precedes and follows it. If the vital sentence is a sweeping personal opinion, a seemingly irrelevant utterance—then the whole document falls under the same criticism; for that sentence is inseparably imbedded in the document, showing the reason why those concerned could not enjoy baptism by dipping in England, and how, in order to enjoy it, they would have to send to Holland for the ordinance.

Crosby's paraphrase of the vital sentence which he makes to read thus: "They had not *as they knew of* revived the ancient practice of immersion," may have suggested to Dr. Thomas, this construction of the vital sentence; but for whatever purpose Crosby saw fit to paraphrase that utterance of the Kiffin manuscript, he positively asserts that, prior to the Blunt movement, immersion "had for some time been disused" in England, (Vol I., p. 97).

He makes this fact the basis of the movement of the "Baptists" for the restoration of immersion in England; he repudiates, whatever he may have believed upon "oral tradition," the baptism of Smyth as never having succeeded to the English Baptists; and he neither by "tradition," nor "church records," anywhere says that Spilsbury's church immersed from 1633 onward. In his very paraphrase of the main paragraph of the Kiffin manuscript he concedes the fact that the Anti-Pedobaptists of England, so far as known, did not practice immersion. He makes Kiffin say: "*Because, tho' some in this nation rejected the baptism of infants, yet they (Blunt and his party) had not as they knew of, revived the ancient custom of immersion.*" Blunt, Kiffin, Blacklock, Lucar, knew, at least, the Baptists who "rejected infant baptism" in and about London; and hence, according to Crosby's version of Kiffin, they did not practice immersion, though they rejected infant baptism. In fact, from the Kiffin manuscript and other documents Crosby drew his own conclusion that "for some time immersion had been disused" in England; and his paraphrase of the main paragraph of the Kiffin manuscript does not alter its meaning which is expressed in the words: "*None having then so practiced in England to professed believers.*"

Hence Crosby's paraphrase of the vital sentence in Kiffin's manuscript means nothing in the light of his own recorded facts in the case; and hence Kiffin's manuscript which Crosby adopts without variation in any other regard must be true in regard to the vital sentence, and so of the date 1641, which is implied in the 1640 date which Crosby uses. Crosby did not, as Dr. Thomas does, treat this document as a "flying leaf," and nobody else has ever so treated it until the present controversy. The collection of records and manuscripts, 1712, whether or not in the nature of "private memo-

randa,"—with "unknown dates" and by "unknown hands," in some instances—must have been sufficiently authenticated by evidence, internal or external, to have been used by so cautious a historian as Crosby, and the only way to destroy the validity of such documents, at this time, is to contradict them by facts which were not in Crosby's possession. Such eminent authority as Dr. Newman says of these papers: "These documents are all thoroughly consistent with each other and with what is otherwise known of the history of the times in general, and of the Congregational and Baptist history in particular. We can conceive of no motive for the forgery of such documents, and those ascribed to Jessey and that not ascribed were old papers in 1710. I think it would be difficult to find much historical material on which we could rely more implicitly." He says that while the Kiffin manuscript, and the Jessey records "differ in some details, they agree in substance and thoroughly confirm each other." Hence, the positive proof by which Dr. Thomas claims to "dismiss the Jessey Records from the case," and the slighting comment of Dr. Dexter with reference to the Kiffin manuscript, are at least offset by the confident vindication of these documents from the charge of invalidity, or inconsistency, by Dr. Newman, an unpartizan and thoroughly competent investigator.

The claim of Dr. Thomas that the Kiffin manuscript by reason of "equivocal language," has confused and misled intelligent investigators before, applies with equal force to hundreds of authenticated documents in history; and Neal and Ivimey differ from Crosby and with each other upon documentary evidence considered reliable. Dr. Whitsitt, it is claimed, charges the document with blundering; but this charge applies only to minor particulars which are unsustained by the Jessey Records and the history of the times. Neither the main paragraph

of the document, nor the document as a whole, is affected by these minor defects, which are not pertinent to the matters at issue. Besides, if every historical document should be thus judged on account of minor blunders not involving the main subject-matter, there would be but little historical evidence of any value. Dr. Thomas does not claim, however, that this objection wholly destroys the Kiffin manuscript, even though it be without Kiffin's signature and from no place of deposit; but he claims that it is a "flying leaf," seriously impaired in its value as evidence. In the light of supplementary history—especially that of Hutchinson and of the Bampfield Document—we see that Dr. Thomas is wrong in this assumption also. His charge that the fifty-three persons reported by Crosby as attached to the Kiffin manuscript, "are not affixed to it as attesting it," but is only an "embodied list," may be technically true; but that list, in Crosby's mind, stood, with other data before him, in the nature of a historic attestation, and it adds immeasurably to the authenticity of the manuscript from an incidental standpoint.

The argument (*ab ignorantia*) employed by Dr. Thomas does not touch the Kiffin Manuscript. If the main paragraph, by the statement "*none*" had "*then*" so "practiced (immersion) to professed believers in England," is the expression of a negative opinion—fairly paraphrased by the words of Crosby that none had been so baptized, "*as they knew of*"—the document still stands unassailable until it is proved that that paragraph, as a negative opinion, is *false*. I deny, however, that it is a negative opinion, or the negative expression of "impersonal ignorance," as sought to be shown by Crosby's supposed paraphrase; and I maintain that the paragraph belongs to Kiffin, the author of the Manuscript, as expressive of a fact maintained by Blunt and others, and as declared by Crosby and the



Bampffield Document—namely, that up to that time in England, immersion had for “*some time*,” or “*long*,” been “*disused*,” had suffered a “*general corruption*,” if not a “*universal corruption*,” as Tombes, quoted by Crosby, clearly intimates. The negative form in which the main paragraph is put implies a positive affirmation of the fact that immersion as believers’ baptism was lost in England, confirmed by Crosby himself and by other writers whom he quotes.

The circumstantial argument of Dr. Thomas, with reference to “*lack of publicity*,” by which, according to Dr. Featley, the Anabaptists of Southwark and other places may have immersed unknown to the Jessey Church people before 1641, cannot apply, for the reason shown heretofore, that such men as Blunt, Lucar and others who had or still belonged to the Southwark Church must have known that that church, at least, did not immerse; and as intelligent and well-informed men, they must have known that the other Anabaptists in and about London did not immerse. Otherwise they would not have acted upon the affirmation of the fact set forth in the main paragraph of the Kiffin Manuscript.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE KIFFIN MANUSCRIPT (CONTINUED).

DR. THOMAS (p. 19), after having reviewed the main paragraph of the Kiffin Manuscript, according to Dr. Whitsitt's construction of it, proceeds to suggest other reasons for hesitating to accept such construction in the light of extraneous circumstances—such as omissions, ambiguities, and inconsistencies, which, if they do not weaken our faith in the writer, “forbid their arbitrary and forced construction in the interest of a theory.”

1. He assumes, with Neal, that the partition of the Jacob Church between Barebone and Jessey did not grow out of a controversy over baptism, but from the danger of discovery by the authorities. There was little danger in 1640-'41 of such interference. This was true in part, as expressed of the division which took place in 1633, which, perhaps, Neal confounds, in this respect, with the division of 1640; but the evidence drawn from the Kiffin Manuscript, confirmed by Hutchinson and Crosby, if not the Bampfield Document, is clear that the division occurred upon the controversy which grew out of the baptismal question.

2. Dr. Thomas assumes that the expression “*with him*” in the manuscript is ambiguous, and applies as much to Barebone as to Jessey; but Kiffin mentions Jessey after Barebone, and Blunt's agreeing “with him” in such order as that, grammatically and naturally, we may infer that the phrase “with him” refers to Jessey, and not Barebone. More properly speaking, perhaps, “*with him*” is a technical phrase, and means “of his church”—that is, “Mr. Richard Blunt and others with him (Jessey)



(of Mr. Jessey's Church) being convinced of baptism, etc."

3. Dr. Thomas claims that Richard Blunt's secession from the Jessey Church, 1633, according to the Jessey Records, and his connection with it, 1640, according to the Kiffin Manuscript, puts the two documents in conflict, which requires explanation or the discrediting of one of them, that is, if we suppose the two paragraphs to be part of the same document. This is not necessarily a discrepancy, since Blunt could have returned to the Jessey Church after his secession from it, 1633; or else, like Mark Lucar, who seceded with him, 1633, and was still with the secession, or with Spilsbury, as others of the "fore-named" in the movement with Blunt, so he (Blunt) may have still been with Spilsbury, and yet have joined in the conference with Jessey, which is most likely.

4. Dr. Thomas claims that the "pivotal sentence" is affected with a "verbal ambiguity" upon the ground that the word "then" points to a "specific date," but is beclouded in its application to that date by the use of the "past participle" (having), so that you cannot tell whether it means "at that time" or "up to that time." The word "so," he says, is also entangled by the curious qualification "to professed believers;" and he asks: "What is the force of this unique limitation?" It is clear that the manuscript naturally means by the phrase, "none having *then* so practiced in England," "up to that time," and by consequence, "at that time," as Crosby, Bampfield, and others show by the long "*disuse*" of immersion in England; and the limitation to "professed believers" is not expressed by "so" which refers to the mode of baptism, "then" and "up to that time" in "*disuse*," but by the *fact* that immersion had not "then," or "up to that time," been "*practiced*" in England to "believers," or "professed believers," since its "*disuse*."

5. Dr. Thomas assumes that the 1640 paragraph of the Jessey Records, as Dr. Whitsitt classifies the document, transferred to its place in the Kiffin Manuscript by its side, would give the expression, "*forenamed*, different antecedents from those assigned by Dr. Whitsitt, who holds that "some of the forenamed" mentioned in the Jessey Records, refers to members in Spilsbury's Church. If Dr. Thomas had not left off the qualifying term "*some*," he would have seen that the application might be the same in both documents—excepting the name of William Kiffin, copied by mistake in the 1638 secession from the Jacob Church to Spilsbury's, and also by mistake in the restored document which puts Kiffin with the secession of 1633. The Kiffin Manuscript, as substantially used by Crosby, shows that "several sober and pious persons belonging to the congregations of the dissenters about London were convinced that believers were the only proper subjects of baptism, and *that it ought to be administered by immersion*;" and this declaration is not inconsistent with the parallel utterance of the original document, which implies that the "forenamed" of Spilsbury's, or the 1633, church were convinced with those of Jessey's church that baptism "ought to be by dipping." The "sober and pious persons," according to the later manuscript, who joined in the movement were from more than one church, as seen by the plural use of "congregations;" and unless the "forenamed" in the original document refer to Barebone's division of the Jacob church, which is impossible, the expression must refer to "some" of those named beforehand in the 1633-'38 church, which is probable, and which is consistent with the natural and inseparable connection of the 1633-1638 with the 1640-1641 parts of the original document as a whole. There is certainly no evidence here that the writer of this document was either careless or unskilled in the construction of his sentences, or

so imperfectly informed as to forbid, in the light of the later version of the original, the hanging of Dr. Whitsitt's issue "on the turning of his phrases."

Finally, Dr. Thomas proceeds further to destroy, if possible, confidence in Dr. Whitsitt's interpretation of the main paragraph of the Kiffin Manuscript under several leading heads, some of which I have already considered under the captions of "Crosby's Account" and "William Kiffin," and which I here pass over. On page 23, Dr. Thomas assumes that the prime question of the Kiffin Manuscript was a lawful administrator. I grant that the agitation of 1640 began back of that date upon the question of an "administrator;" but in the agitation the mode of baptism became the prime question and the administrator a subordinate question, until the mode was settled according to the convictions of Blunt and those with him in the conferences which led to the conclusion that baptism "ought to be by dipping" and practiced to "believers only." This is a fact, according to both the original and the later documents. "The great objection," as Hutchinson says, "was the want of an administrator," which [when the mode and subjects of baptism were settled] "was removed by sending certain messengers to Holland, whence they were supplied"—simply because of the *disuse* of immersion in England. The usual assumption that the Helwisse and Spilsbury churches were immersing, at the time—and that those of the Blunt movement did not regard their administration of baptism as legitimate, and for that reason did not apply to them for the rite—is wholly disproven by the facts revealed in the history of the English Baptists by Hutchinson, Crosby, Bampfield, and other writers of the time. Moreover, this assumption is in conflict with the position of Dr. Thomas himself, by which he tries to show that Blunt and those concerned in the movement of 1640, while they might have had the nega-

tive opinion, in their ignorance, that there were "none" who were then practicing immersion in England, they might have been mistaken! The "perplexing sentence" of the Kiffin Manuscript is not, therefore, "wholly irrelevant," if not explained by the motive in sending to Holland for an administrator as the chief point of the document. All the facts go to show that the mode and subjects of baptism *became* the prime question, and that "legitimacy," though first sprung in 1638, became subordinate in 1640 '41, when immersion was discovered as lost and restored as scriptural. Possibly there were some who had been immersed in infancy, or who so practiced to infants; but, according to the Kiffin Manuscript, there were "*none*" who so practiced in England to "professed believers." This fact coupled with the desire for legitimacy, was the motive for sending Blunt to Holland for immersion.

The "professed believers" argument of Dr. Thomas (p. 24) is wholly imaginary and out of the question. There is nothing in the original manuscript which leads us to distinguish between "believers" and "professed believers" to whom immersion should be administered; and the later document settles the question against Dr. Thomas. It shows that the "sober and pious persons belonging to the congregations of the dissenters about London" who engaged in the movement for the restoration of immersion in England, were simply "convinced that *believers* were the only proper subjects of baptism and that it ought to be administered by immersion." The two documents, therefore, agree that "professed believers" and "believers," respectively mentioned, are the same persons entitled to baptism which "ought to be by dipping"—"ought to be administered by immersion;" and the object of the conferences, in both accounts, was about "their enjoying it"—"what methods they should take to enjoy the ordinance in its primitive purity." It was

not a Pedobaptist movement confined to a Pedobaptist church in which "The old sore question of Anabaptism" was the issue. It was an Anabaptist movement against infant baptism and in favor of restoring immersion as believers' baptism which was lost; and it involved no distinction of "believers" from "professed believers," by which Dr. Thomas, after trying to discredit the pertinency of the main paragraph of the Kiffin Manuscript as any sort of valid testimony, gives it a specific Pedobaptist application! The issue upon which that movement was based was simply this and nothing more: Baptism "ought to be by dipping" and administered to believers only; as such the Scriptural mode and practice in England have been lost; and in order to restore the same it must be sent for to Holland.

In the sixth and last objection, Dr. Thomas (p. 26) claims that "This record instead of assuming to give an account of the origin of the immersing Baptist churches from the Jessey Church, in 1641, seems rather to imply a contrary conception." Now if anything seems clear from these records, it is that the "two companies," under the leadership of Blunt and Blacklock, which "met" together in order to receive immersion, and which "did intend to meet after this," (not by formal Covenant at which some scrupled, but by mutual agreement), constituted a church to which "many were added" and which "increased much." This was the introduction of the succession movement and "method" by which the "English Baptists," as Crosby affirms, restored immersion; and the Kiffin Manuscript and Neal agree that this movement and method ended with 1641. The "foundation" of the movement was laid in the Jessey Church since Jessey agreed with Blunt and other Baptists in conviction and joined with them in Conference, which led to the result—and since the largest secession which constituted this

first immersion congregation in England withdrew from the Jessey Church, especially, according to Crosby, in 1641. Hence, according to Dr. Whitsitt the records assume correctly to give an account of the origin of immersing Baptist churches from the Jessey Church in 1641.

It does not help Dr. Thomas whether Spilsbury was ever connected with the Jessey church or not; nor that the "Churches in Order," with which the seceders of 1633 desired affiliation, did not originate from it. Grant for the sake of argument that Spilsbury's church and the "Churches in Order" already existed in 1633, and that they were Anti-Pedobaptist churches, there is no evidence that they were immersionists. As I have already shown, in the light of the Blunt movement, they could not have been immersionists without Blunt and his party knowing it; and the suggestion of Dr. Thomas "that the Spilsbury church, at least, was immersionist by the fact that it was after conference with some of them (probably) that Blunt and his comrades insisted on immersion," is wholly untenable from the fact that Blunt was already an Anti-Pedobaptist of the secession of 1633, and was probably a member of Spilsbury's church, or of the secession of 1633. He was among the number "receiving a further" or a "new baptism" in 1633, which Dr. Thomas would claim, no doubt, as immersion; and if this were true, then Blunt would not have been found in the movement of 1640, with the new conviction that baptism "ought to be by dipping," that as such it was lost in England, and accepting the deputation to Holland for its restoration.

Dr. Thomas thus concludes: "We are brought back by reasonable inference from the language of the document to precise accord with the positive account of the matter given by Crosby, affirming the long prior use of immersion." This shady document—this equivocal, ambiguous, inconsistent "fly-



ing leaf"—is in "precise accord" with Crosby's affirmation of the "long-prior use of immersion" in England! I agree with Dr. Thomas with this difference only, that Crosby positively affirms (Vol. I., p. 97) that immersion in England, prior to the Blunt movement, "*had for some time been disused;*" and I challenge Dr. Thomas for the proof to the contrary. Crosby is exactly to the reverse of Dr. Thomas; but Crosby and the Kiffin Manuscript, as Dr. Thomas says, are in "precise accord" with each other—but not as to the long prior *use*, but *disuse*, of baptism in England. The main paragraph of the Kiffin Manuscript, as confirmed by Crosby, absolutely forbids the existence of immersion as believers' baptism in England "*for some time*" prior to 1640-41.

There is no use tinkering with the Kiffin Document. The only way to escape its force is to prove it a forgery. This a scholar and a church historian like Dr. Thomas would not attempt to do. In the light of Hutchinson, Crosby, Evans, Gould and other English writers, fraud can never be charged to this and similar documents; and Dr. Thomas, with the acumen of the lawyer, has picked for flaws without success. In fact, while Dr. Thomas blows "cold," he blows "hot," finally, on the document, and tries to turn it into a fine piece of testimony in favor of his own theory.





## CHAPTER VI.

### SUM OF THE CROSBY ARGUMENT.

IN FURTHER reply to Dr. Thomas against the assumption that the Kiffin Manuscript leads by "reasonable inference" to "precise accord" with the positive statement of Crosby affirming the long-prior use of immersion in England, I offer the following arguments which I regard as unanswerable:

1. According to Crosby (Vol. I., p. 96), there was, at a given time, an agitation among some of the "English Protestants," whom in the margin of page 97, he calls "English Baptists," on the subject of "*reviving the ancient practice of immersion,*" and this statement is based upon the Hutchinson account and the Kiffin Manuscript, which relate that some of the pious dissenters of the congregations about London [Blunt and those with him] concluded that "believers were the only proper subjects of baptism," and that baptism "ought to be by dipping," "administered by immersion." (I., pp. 100-102.)

2. Up to this time, according to Crosby, "immersion" in England "*had for some time been disused*" (I., p. 97); and this statement is in "precise accord" also with the Kiffin Manuscript, which says: "None having *then* so practiced in England to professed believers." This statement is also confirmed by the Bampfield Document, which says of the practice of immersion in England, at this time, that it "had so long been disused that there were *none* who had been so baptized to be found." (Review of the Question, p. 232.) Even in the Church of England, according to Crosby (II.; p. xlvi., Preface), the practice of immersion, though defended by some,

practically ended with the close of the 16th century, or with the introduction of the reign of James I. Already, in 1570, the Catechism of Noel, of sole authority in the Church of England at that time, prescribed sprinkling as indifferent with immersion for baptism. (Latin Collection by A. Howell, p. 207. Parker Publication Society.) As far back as 1528 Tyndale complained of the people on account of their preference for immersion over sprinkling as the mode of infant baptism. In 1645 the Westminster Assembly rejected immersion, even as an alternate form with sprinkling, which goes to show that the Presbyterians had long ago abandoned dipping, and they now hold that immersion is not the mode of baptism at all. The Puritans had universally adopted sprinkling. At the time of this Blunt movement, immersion, as believers' baptism, in the language of Barber, was "lost," "raced out;" and Crosby is in exact agreement with Kiffin, Bampfield, Barber and others of the period when he says that, at the time of the movement of the "English Baptists" for the "revival of immersion," it "*had for some time been disused.*"

3. The agitation for the revival of immersion in England began by the "Baptists," and was opposed by the Pedobaptists, in view of its restoration. Crosby says: "When some of the English Protestants (Baptists) WERE FOR reviving the antient practice of immersion, they had several difficulties thrown in their way about a proper administrator." The expression, "WERE FOR," shows the precedence of the agitation before the fact of restoration by the "English Baptists;" and this is proof positive that it was a Baptist and not a Pedobaptist movement, and opposed by Pedobaptists to begin with. The controversy, sprung before the restoration, continued many years after the fact; but it began by the Pedobaptists upon the attempt to restore immersion by the "Baptists." (I., pp. 96, 97.)

4. The nature of this controversy demonstrates that it was a Baptist movement to begin with, and that as such, the "English Baptists," according to Crosby, were both "perplexed" and "divided" as to "how to act in the matter (of restoration), so as not to be guilty of any disorder or self-contradiction." (I., p. 97.) If it had been a Pedobaptist movement the question of "disorder or self-contradiction" would never have occurred to the movers. Neither would any but Baptists have been "perplexed" and "divided" over the "difficulties" thrown in their way by Pedobaptists.

(a) According to Crosby, the Pedobaptist argument at the beginning of the English Reformation was substantially this, that the Anabaptists, who at that time adopted believers' baptism and broke with infant baptism, began their baptism anew without a proper administrator, since all the world at that time was in the church through infant baptism, and that the Anabaptist position, if true, would unchurch all who were baptized in infancy—so Bishop Burnet.

(b) The Pedobaptist argument in 1640 was that those who would restore immersion, which had been lost, likewise had no proper administrator "*to begin that method of baptizing;*" and that the Baptist position, which held that immersion was the "essential form of baptism," if true, would imply that there were "none truly baptized"—that is, would unbaptize everybody else. (I., pp. 96, 97.)

Not only does this Pedobaptist argument at the time prove that the restoration movement was distinctively Baptist, but that there were none immersed at the period of restoration, not even the Baptists themselves.

5. The several methods by which the "English Baptists," as Crosby calls them, proposed to restore immersion, and by which to avoid inconsistency, demonstrate that, when the movement began to be agi-

tated, immersion as believers' baptism did not exist in England, and that it was distinctively a Baptist movement. There were three different "methods" proposed for the solution of the difficulty which the Pedobaptists threw in their way. (I., p. 97.)

(a) Some were for beginning with a self-baptized administrator, after the manner of John Smyth; but Crosby shows that that method was repudiated, and that Smyth's self-baptism, though it were immersion, never succeeded to the English Baptists. The Bampfield Document shows that this method was also attempted at the restoration of baptism in England, but that it went to nought.

(b) Others were for sending to the "Foreign Protestants" (Dutch Baptists) and obtaining it thus by succession from them.

(c) The great body of Baptists held that baptism could be lawfully restored by an unbaptized administrator when lost or generally corrupted.

Crosby then proceeds to show (I., p. 100) that these two last methods were "adopted" and "practiced accordingly." He says: "The two other methods that I mentioned were indeed both taken by the *Baptists at their revival of immersion in England*, as I find it acknowledged and justified in their writings." How?

(1.) According to the Hutchinson Account and the Kiffin Manuscript, both of which Crosby quotes to prove the fact that Richard Blunt was sent to Holland, where he obtained immersion from the Collegiants, those "foreign Protestants," who, as Crosby says, "*had used immersion for some time*"—that is, since 1619, in Holland where immersion had up to that time, according to Crosby's intimation here, been also lost.

(2.) "But," says Crosby, "the greatest number of the English Baptists, and the more judicious, looked upon all this as needless trouble and what proceeded from the old Popish doctrine of right to administer

sacraments by an uninterrupted succession—that is, sending to Holland for baptism, etc. They *affirmed*, therefore (the greatest number and the more judicious of the English Baptists), and *practiced accordingly*, that after a general corruption of baptism, an unbaptized person might warrantably baptize, and so begin a reformation.” This theory of beginning by an unbaptized administrator was maintained by Spilsbury, Tombes and Laurence; and Crosby concludes by saying: “By the excellent reasonings of these and other learned men, we see their (the Baptists) *beginning* was well defended upon the same principles on which all other Protestants founded their reformation.” (Vol. I., pp. 103-107.)

6. Crosby is clear that these “two methods” were “both taken by the *Baptists*” at a given time without reference to dates in this connection. When was it? “*At their revival of immersion in England.*” How was it? By a simultaneous movement, by two different methods, on the part of the “English Baptists” as a body; and though one method logically appears to precede the other in the order of time, yet the general movement is comprehended in the same period of time and belonged to both bodies of the English Baptists as distinguished by successionists and anti-successionists. The anti-succession method evidently followed the succession method immediately upon the adoption of the latter; or, as Dr. Newman suggests, the anti-succession method may have been adopted in 1640, and before Blunt returned from Holland, upon the *agitation* of the subject by the successionists, which would better explain the early utterances of Spilsbury and Barber in 1641-42. This discovery, however, is not made by Neal, who drew his inference from the Kiffin and other Manuscripts, that the Jessey-Blunt movement had the precedence.

7. The Crosby Account assumes that the Baptists of England, as such, had a “beginning” of their

own, both organic and baptismal, the organic preceding the baptismal; and he regards them as other English Protestants, establishing their reformation upon similar principles. He fixes their baptismal beginning at the time of "their *revival* of immersion in England;" and, whatever the date, this "*beginning*" or "reformation," similar to that of other Protestants in principle and fact, argues that immersion was lost in England, and that its restoration was a combined movement of the Baptists already organized into churches.

8. The point at issue is this: What was the date of this baptismal "*beginning*?" I unhesitatingly affirm that it must have taken place, 1640-41, according to the Kiffin Manuscript, confirmed by Neal. The movement as described and detailed by Crosby cannot be divided without violence to the order and connection of his account, nor can it be applied to any other period in Baptist history. It neither fits in whole, nor in part, 1611, 1633, nor 1638. The question of immersion as believers' baptism and a proper administrator thereof was never sprung in England among the Baptists before nor after 1640-41; and the controversy which raged between Baptists and Pedobaptists on this subject can only be traced from 1640-41 and onward. Besides this, Crosby, in his use of the Kiffin Manuscript, gives the date 1640 (Vol. III., p. 141) as the year of the agitation on the subject in question in the Jessey Church; and he records the event of 1641 which followed it in the Kiffin Manuscript, in which he shows the restoration of immersion by the Baptists of England, originating in the Blunt movement. This unqualifiedly settles the date of the movement, even according to Crosby.

9. The assumption that this 1640-41 movement was merely a succession issue sprung by a handfull of secessionists from a Pedobaptist Church, while the Helwisse and Spilsbury Churches were already



in the practice of immersion, is wholly at variance with Crosby's account and with Hutchinson, Kiffin, Bampfield, Jessey and other documents, to say nothing of Spilsbury, Tombes, Lawrence, Barber and other Baptist writers of the period. Crosby positively makes it a movement of the "English Baptists," without distinction and as a body at a given time; and all the powers of sophistry and casuistry combined can never draw any other conclusion from this section of Crosby's history of the Baptists of England.

The movement was started, I grant, by secessions from the congregations of Protestant dissenters in and about London by "sober and pious persons," like Blunt and those with him in the agitation; but Crosby says that they were "Baptists"—Baptists, evidently from some of the Baptist Churches, and followed by many from Pedobaptist Churches, who began this movement; and when the movement had begun, the whole English Baptist fraternity joined in it, and restored immersion along different lines of thought and method. Even if the movement had been started by Pedobaptists seceding from Pedobaptist Churches, it is clear that Crosby makes it a Baptist movement in which all the Baptists of England joined.

Finally, it may be conceded that there were some few Anabaptist conventicles, hid here and there, as Hillcliffe, Eyethorne and Bocking-Baintree, which succeeded from earlier dates than belong to English Baptist history. Crosby, though doubted by some, says that individually the Anabaptists were "intermixed" with the Puritans up to 1633, when they began to separate and organize churches of their own. Grant all this, and yet there is no evidence of immersion among those Anabaptists, whether mixed with the Puritans, or hid here and there in conventicles, until 1641; and even if there had been, their immersion would cut no figure in the restoration



movement of 1641, in which the Baptist body, as such, acted. All that could be said of such conventicles, if they ever existed, is that after 1641 they fell into line with, and were absorbed by, the Baptist body and movement to which, before 1641, they were then wholly unknown in history, and wholly unknown now as to their first existence, except upon "tradition," which no reliable historian has ever regarded as valid history in the case.

This is the Crosby argument in the case against Dr. Thomas; and I think I have shown conclusively that the Kiffin Manuscript, by "reasonable inference," is in "precise accord" with Crosby's statement—not of the long prior *use* of immersion in England—but of the long prior *disuse* of immersion in England, and of its restoration by the Baptists in 1640-41. To be sure, Crosby does not mention the 1641 date; but his account, in the very nature of the facts detailed and described—in the very order and connection of those facts—accords with the Kiffin Document, which originally fixed this date, which is confirmed by Neal, and which essentially follows 1640, a date used by Crosby himself.



## CHAPTER VII.

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### THE SIMULTANEOUS CHANGE.

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DR. THOMAS makes the point, (pp. 6, 7) of prior presumption against Dr. Whitsitt's theory that about 1641, some fifty Baptist congregations simultaneously changed from aspersion to immersion; repudiating "a custom to which they were traditionally attached, which was in universal use, in behalf of another custom which nobody among them had ever practiced or heard of;" and that too "without any newly assigned or intelligible motive, etc."

Dr. Thomas presents this objection with greater emphasis and in stronger light than the subject demands, but it deserves respectful consideration. There is some difficulty in the way of answering it for the lack of voluminous testimony contemporaneous with Crosby's account of the change, which definitely describes the process of such a revolution; but there is sufficient evidence to show that the change did take place, and how it took place according to the "methods" adopted for the restoration of immersion by the Baptists of England. It is perfectly easy to see how the Blunt movement occurred in the establishment of the first immersion congregation upon the principle of baptismal succession derived from Holland. Dr. Thomas does not deny this change, although he ascribes it to a Pedobaptist congregation. Crosby, however, says that the other method by anti-succession was adopted by the "greatest number of the English Baptists, and the more judicious" who "affirmed and practiced accordingly, that after a general corruption of baptism, an unbaptized person might warrantably bap-

tize and so begin a reformation;" and he says that these Baptists of England established their "*beginning*" upon the "same principles upon which other protestants built their reformation." According to the logical connection and order of Crosby's narrative of this revolution in Baptist history, this "reformation" among the great body of Baptists, began either upon, or immediately after, the movement of Blunt to restore immersion in 1640-41.

So much for the fact that the simultaneous change did occur about 1641. The Bampfield Document is also an account of the methods taken by the Baptists (of England) to obtain a proper administration of baptism by immersion, "when that practice had been so long disused that there was no one who had been so baptized to be found;" and this document goes into details of the manner in which especially the Spilsbury method was adopted, with a vindication of the same by Henry Laurence, whom Crosby quotes in precisely the same connection in his account of the adoption of this method by the "greatest number and the more judicious of the Baptists" at "their revival of immersion in England." Bampfield, who became a Baptist in London about 1676, and who sought from "printed records" and "credible witnesses" to find the "first administrator" of immersion, in the "Historical Declaration of His Life," (pp. 15, 16, 17) mentions five different forms of administration by which the anti-succession method was put in operation; and however variant or irregular its process of adoption and extension, at the time Bampfield wrote, after 1676, the Spilsbury-Laurence method had become general among the Baptists in and about London.

It must be remembered that in 1641 the Baptists with their supposed fifty churches were, after all, but a handfull of people, mostly located in and about London. It would not have taken long to effect the change from aspersion to immersion,

especially at this revolutionary period of new ideas and greater liberty, when once the conviction seized the general body of brethren that baptism "ought to be by dipping," and that the ordinance had been "lost;" and yet while the change seems to have been immediate and simultaneous with many, it did not so follow with all. Dr. Evans (Vol. II., pp. 52, 53) points to the fact that even in 1646, at Chelmsford, there existed the "Old Men, or *Aspersi*" and the "New Men, or *Immersi*," indicating that, among the Anabaptists or Baptists, "both methods (of baptism) were practiced;" and he says again (Vol. II., p. 79): "Most will now see that the practice of the Mennonite brethren (affusion) was common in this country (England). These New Men (*Immersi*) soon cast them (the Old Men, or *Aspersi*) into the shade, and their practice speedily became obsolete. Immersion as the mode of baptism, became the rule of *both sections of the Baptist community*. Indeed, from this time (1646) beyond the facts already given (at Chelmsford) we know not a solitary exception." It took about five years from 1641 to 1646 to fully effect the change among the Anabaptists, or Baptists; and from the literature of the period, we infer considerable excitement and controversy which indicate the variant and irregular process, in the intervening time, which characterized this revolution in Baptist history.

Up to the year 1640-41 there is not the slightest hint of immersion among the English Baptists. They distinctly separated from their Puritan brethren, apparently in good fellowship, upon the ground of disbelief in infant baptism and of belief in believer's baptism. They received "another" or a "new" baptism; but it is not until "they were for" *reviving* "the ancient practice of immersion" that the controversy began with the Pedobaptists of England, in which we discover from 1640-41 onward that a change took place in the practice of the Bap-

tists, or that there was any distinction among them as to "*Aspersi*" and "*Immersi*." Before this date we have the historical data of Anabaptist or Baptist organizations, of their opposition to infant baptism and of their "further" or "new" baptism, about which there seemed to be little or no concern among their Puritan brethren, at least; but it was not until 1640-41 that public and violent attention is directed to their practice of immersion which was called "new" not in the sense of a "further" baptism after the mode of their Pedobaptist ancestors, but in the sense of an *innovation* upon that mode.

In fact, the first attention ever called to baptism as having any "novel mode of administration" to be met with in the history of the times, was in 1641 when "a great multitude of people were seen going towards the river in Hackney Marsh (near London) and were followed to the waterside, where they were all *baptized again*, (rebaptized) themselves doing it *one to another*"—in perfect accord with Bampfield's account of the several variant and irregular methods by which the Spilsbury theory went into practice at the restoration of immersion by the Baptists of England. It is not certain that this was altogether a Baptist transaction, but it is characteristic of the change inaugurated in 1641, and of the unsettled and irregular process by which the movement of rebaptism by immersion began at that time.

Besides this, there is some other evidence of the crude, if not improper, ways which characterized the introduction of this new movement in England, which go to show its novelty for some time after 1641. The baptism of both men and women naked by some, and by all sorts of administrators, though denied by a few leading Baptists of the times, was charged by Baxter, Watts, Edwards, Houghton, Goodwin, Featley, Haggard, Hall, Bake-

well, Richardson and others; and whether true or false, it is clear that the period to which we refer the change of baptism from sprinkling to immersion, was marked by many gross irregularities and novelties. Some Anabaptist sermons, catechisms and other utterances are quoted in favor of "naked" baptism at the time; and it is probable that the appended note of the Baptist Confession of 1644 which accompanies the article on baptism, and which requires "convenient garments" for "both the administrator and subject, with all modesty" was suggested by this abuse of the ordinance, in its variant and irregular administration by irresponsible persons, characteristic of its introduction at that period.

Again it is also clear from the controversial literature of the time that this change took place 1640-41 and onward, and was a novelty in the estimation of the Pedobaptists—not denied by the Baptists themselves, but so admitted by them. In the earlier part of 1642, Barebone, in a published work on "Infant Baptism," speaks of "the way of new baptizing, *lately begun* to be practiced" by the Baptists—"very lately," he says again, "according to their new discovery"—and as making an "absolute nullity" of all other baptism, in precise accord with Crosby's statement of the Pedobaptist controversy when the Baptists "*were for* reviving the ancient practice of immersion." Barebone charges the Baptists as having been baptized a "*third time*," and as having made "a nullity of their *present* baptism," (1) in having formerly rejected their infant baptism in favor of believers' baptism; (2) in now rejecting aspersion as the "further baptism" received at the time of becoming Anti-Pedobaptists; (3) in having revived immersion as the Scriptural and only mode of baptism. In the same year, 1642, several treatises were written by Kilcop, Barber, A.R. and R.B., in reply to Barebone; but there is not only no denial of Barebone's charges, but a defense of the charges



preferred. Barber claimed that he had been raised up to divulge the glorious principle of the "True Baptism," and he distinctly avers that the ordinance had been "lost," "destroyed and raced out, both for *form and matter*," and that true "believers, having Christ, the Word and the Spirit," had the right to "raise" up again baptism, which had been "raced out." In his reply to R.B., 1643, Barebone fixes "*two or three years*" as the period of "descent," or "some such short time," of the "total dippers in the kingdom"—which easily points back to 1641 as the then well known date of reviving immersion in England by the Baptists. Watts, in 1656-7, gives the origin of dipping in England as "*about 13. or 14. yeare agoe*," which would also fit the year 1640-41, as the date of the baptismal revival, or its transition state immediately following. Of course exact dates were not preserved by these writers.

The many designations of the Baptists' reformation of baptism as a "*novelty*" by the Pedit-baptists from 1642 to 1670 and onward go to demonstrate by their uniformity and persistence that a baptismal change took place among the Baptists in 1641 and onward. Dr. Featley, in 1644, calls it a "*new leaven*;" Cooke, 1644, speaks of the Baptists as "*new dippers*;" the author of the *Loyall Convert*, 1644, styles it, "*The New Distemper*;" Knutton, 1644, calls it "*new and upstart*;" Pagitt, 1645, speaks of it as a "*new crotchet*;" Saltmarsh, 1645, Eachard, 1645, Stevens, 1650, Goodwin, 1653, call the Anabaptist baptizing a "*new baptism*;" Baillie, 1646, calls it a "*new invention*;" Watts, 1657, declares that it was a "*new business and a very novelty*;" Baxter, 1669, calls "*it a new sort of baptism*;" and so others spoke of it at the time as a "*yesterday's conceit*;" a "*a sparkle of new light*;" "*taken up only the other year*;" and while the Baptists, such men as Blunt, Kilcop, A.R., R.B., Knollys, King, Barber, Collins and others, admitted that it was "*new*" in



England, they invariably defended its restoration upon the ground that the ordinance had been "corrupted," "buried," "raced out," and "lost" in the "apostacy." The testimony of some of these writers is either denied, or given another application, but in the light of Crosby's account and the Bampfield Document, these expressions are in precise accord with the facts of 1640-41, which record the restoration of the "ancient practice of immersion" upon the ground that it "had for some time been disused," and "so long disused" that, in England, there "was no one to be found who had so been baptised." Moreover, the language of this controversy from 1641 to 1670 and still onward is in precise accord with the grounds upon which Crosby declares that that controversy began when the Baptists "were for" reviving immersion.

In conclusion, I agree with Dr. Thomas that "so toppling a hypothesis," as the sudden and simultaneous change of the Baptists in 1641, "needs massive support;" and I claim that under the circumstances of the times in which the change took place, the evidence of the fact is amply sufficient, as furnished by Dr. Whitsitt, and further by my reference to Crosby and the Bampfield Document. Though the Baptists were then an insignificant people and thoroughly despised, their movement called public attention and opposition to such a degree that there is no mistaking the fact of their baptismal revolution in the literature of the period; and with their suddenly changed and enthusiastic convictions, the transition and transformation are easily accounted for. The marvel now is that, with all the lights before us, such a man as Dr. Thomas should enter so strenuously upon the effort to explain away, or give different application to the facts and utterances which so plainly point to this Baptist transition which clearly took place in 1640-41, and which cannot be predicated of any other period of Baptist History in England.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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### THE MONUMENTS.

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THAT the "momentous change among Baptists" occurred in 1641 admits of no reasonable doubt in the light of the literature and the facts of that period recorded by Crosby, Bampfield and the controversial writers of the time. Dr. Whitsitt, in his defense of this position, erected seven monuments in commemoration of the fact drawn from the history of the time; and Dr. Thomas in a whole chapter (pp. 30-38) undertakes to pull down these monuments by various hypothetical arguments which seem on their face valid, but which, after careful examination, appear to leave the monuments which Dr. Whitsitt erected still standing.

1. Dr. Whitsitt assumes that the XLth Article of the Baptist Confession (1644) prescribing immersion, with directions about clothing—for the first time imbedded in an English declaration of faith—indicates that not only was the rite new, but that the manner of administering it was yet unsettled. The argument of Dr. Thomas that the Baptists hitherto had "scrupled" the use of "formal words," and "were slow to promulgate set creeds," does not hold, since they had already set up creeds in England, though without the immersion article; and he neutralizes his argument that the fear of persecution explains the absence this article in any past declaration by his assumption that "up to the Westminster Assembly, all religious bodies in England had recognized and even insisted upon immersion as normal baptism." Why, then, should the English Baptists have been afraid to put an immersion article in their former creeds? The part

which the Westminster Confession, or the abolition of the High Commission Court, played in actuating the Baptists to make their Confession in 1644, especially as regards their immersion article, appears to the contrary in the reasons they assign for their manifesto; and whatever the individual utterances of isolated Baptists hitherto in England or elsewhere, that immersion alone is baptism, it is a significant fact that such an article never appeared in an English Baptist Confession before 1644, explicable only upon the previous history that immersion, as believers' baptism in England, had been restored in 1641.

2. The repudiation of the name "Anabaptist" and the adoption of the name "Baptist" in 1644 is claimed by Dr. Whitsitt as a monumental implication that immersion had been recently adopted in the place of aspersion by the Baptists of England. Dr. Thomas argues that the title "Baptist" had before that been applied to the Anabaptists of Switzerland (1532, 1560), and that the Mennonites had been substantially so designated. Granted; but this does not alter the significance of the fact that the Anabaptists of England never assumed the designation until 1644, thirty-three years after their origin in England as organized churches. It was not until their restoration of immersion in England that they began to be called "baptized people," "baptized churches"—that is, Baptists and Baptist Churches—and no incident in their history at the time is more significant of the fact that they had changed from aspersion to immersion in the year 1641.

3. The next monument of Dr. Whitsitt, in evidence of the recent restoration of immersion (1641) is the baptismal controversy which succeeded the event. Dr. Thomas claims that "it was the attempted exclusion of immersion by the Westminster Assembly, and not the attempt of the Baptists to

introduce it, that gave rise to the discussion;" but the controversy began in 1642, two years before the Westminster Assembly excluded immersion; and even before that, when the Baptists of England "*were for* reviving the ancient practice," the controversy began by the Pedobaptists upon the ground that immersion, held as "the essential form of baptism," would render other forms of baptism a "nullity," and imply that none others were "truly baptized." Dr. Thomas says again that it was not immersion, but "rebaptism," which provoked the controversy; but the Anabaptists had always rebaptized, and although rebaptism was in controversy at the time, as ever before, yet the great offense now was immersion, which nullified aspersion and unbaptized those not immersed, as is shown by the whole contention from 1640-41 to 1644 and onward. The assumption of Dr. Thomas that "immersion was then questioned by nobody" is contradicted right at the start by Crosby's statement (Vol. I., p. 97) of the Pedobaptist ground of opposition to "immersion," held as "the essential form of that ordinance" by the Baptists and by the controversy between Barebone, Barber, Kilcop, and all the others cited by Dr. Whitsitt, who joined in the controversy. Nothing is clearer than that the controversy about Baptist baptism, as a "*new*" thing from 1640-41 to 1656 and onward, is a monument to the fact of the restoration of immersion at that time as believers' baptism.

4. The existence of the "Old Men, or *Aspersi*," and the "New Men, or *Immersi*," after 1641 and down to 1646 in England, and the fact of no such distinction before 1641 is regarded by Dr. Whitsitt as another monument to the fact that immersion was restored by the "English Baptists" in 1641. Dr. Thomas admits the force of Dr. Whitsitt's conclusion that the churches thus divided, or distinguished, by aspersionists and immersionists were

Baptist Churches; but he thinks it "historically probable" that this distinction obtained in Pedobaptist instead of Baptist Churches, in a transition state, of which, according to certain authorities cited, it was difficult because of inter-mixture to know whether they were Baptists or Pedobaptists. He seems to think that such a state is discoverable in the Jacob Church before 1641, when "some from time to time were convinced solely as to immersion, some as to the necessity of faith before baptism, while some went on to insist on immersion, even to those who had already been received as church members;" but this last assumption is like the Doctor's theory of the "professed believers" found in the Kiffin Manuscript, without any historical authority whatever. As to his assumption at the time of Pedobaptist Churches in a mixed state, composed of the *Aspersi* and the *Immersi*, he is also mistaken, since the Chelmsford Record applies the distinction solely to Anabaptists, and not to Pedobaptists. Dr. Evans, as already cited (Vol. II., p. 79), explicitly refers the distinction to the Anabaptists, or Baptists, some of whom still followed the Mennonite form of baptism which was aspersion; and he goes on to show that among the Baptists after 1646, the "New Men, or *Immersi*," soon cast "the Old Men, or *Aspersi*," into the shade, and their practice became obsolete." He then adds: "Immersion, as the mode of baptism, became the rule with both sections of the Baptist community."

5. The break in the relationship between the Mennonite brethren and the followers of Helwisse and Morton, after 1641, is regarded as another monument by Dr. Whitsitt indicating the change from Mennonite aspersion to Baptist immersion. Henceforward the Mennonites being recognized as unbaptized, they would be indisposed to "continue the friendship and fellowship that had formerly prevailed." Scheffer is authority for positive evidence

of the fact; but Dr. Thomas argues the improbability of alienation on such a ground from the open communion character of the Jessey type of English Baptists, and from the fact that the Mennonites received into their membership the Smyth schism, the baptized portion of which he conceives to have been immersed according to his inference from the language of Dr. Muller. Dr. Thomas also implies that the real antagonism arose from differences regarding foot-washing, civic oaths, war, and he might have added the deity of Christ; but upon these questions, according to Drs. Muller and Evans, we trace the most fraternal correspondence between the Mennonite and the English brethren up to 1631; and, whatever their differences of opinion with regard to some questions, there was no tendency to alienation between them on these accounts. Again, the Helwisse Churches up to 1641 were not of the Jessey type of English Baptists, mixed in membership, and holding to open communion with the unimmersed; for there were no such churches until after 1641, at which date immersion was introduced. Up to 1641, according to Drs. Evans and Muller (*Hist. Early Baptists*, Vol. II., pp. 52, 53, 79), Mennonite affusion evidently prevailed with "both sections of the Baptist community," and only entirely disappeared after 1646; and no break is distinguishable between the Mennonite and Helwisse Churches until 1641. Dr. Thomas' inference from Dr. Muller that, though some of the Smyth faction were sprinkled when received by the Waterlanders, those who were already baptized had been immersed, is completely overthrown by the testimony of the Waterlanders themselves, who were Arminians and affusionists, and who, when they questioned the English "about their doctrine of salvation and the ground and form (mode) of their baptism," said: "No difference was found between them and us." (*Evans*, Vol. I., p. 208.)



6. The wild and senseless panic which sprung up after 1641 about the health of the people endangered by immersion, is Dr. Whitsitt's sixth monument to the fact that the introduction of immersion in England was of recent date. It had never occurred before, and it would be impossible now. Dr. Thomas alludes to the fact as an illustration of the "occasional silliness of great men;" but his implied argument that the furor about health originated in the view of some that the "advocates of immersion" covertly aimed to "discourage infant baptism, since immersion would be in the case of infants especially deadly," certainly does not accord with the general history of the case. I agree that the agitation was truly an illustration of the "occasional silliness of great men," and of their blindness and prejudice; but this characterization of the subject and the implied argument cited do not, in any way, answer the position of Dr. Whitsitt that this agitation on the subject of health never occurred before nor since in the history of English Baptists; and that it pointed to the historic fact of the recent introduction of immersion (1641) in England. If the Baptists practiced immersion before 1641 in England, why did not the "health" question originate before 1641?

7. The last monument of Dr. Whitsitt to the recent introduction of immersion in England (1641) is found in the word "*rhantize*," just then come into use in England, and intended to philologically "antithesize immerse" by way of classical distinction. A. R. used it in his "Treatise of the Vanity of Childish Baptism," London, 1642, p. 11, in its Greek form; and Christopher Blackwood (1644) anglicised it, and called it a "pretty new slumped word" that "should signify something in English." Dr. Thomas, however, says that "*rhantize* is not broad enough to antithesize *immerse*," and that the introduction of the word pointed to a conflict be-



tween the Pedobaptists, some of whom had yielded to pouring, but "resented the further change to sprinkling then just being introduced"—that is, in 1645, according to Dr. Wall. "The new word," says Dr. Thomas, "was not derived to decide the departure from immersion to pouring [that is, among Pedobaptists, I suppose he means], but from pouring to sprinkling." The fatal defect in the argument of Dr. Thomas is that the word "*rhantize*" was introduced in 1642, 1644, by the Baptists in order to distinguish more perfectly, and as never before, immersion from aspersion; and whether "broad enough to antithesize *immerse*" or not, the advocates of immersion so used it, first of all, after 1641, the date of introducing immersion into England as believers' baptism. The assumption of Dr. Thomas that "*rhantize*" was introduced into English literature, about the year 1645, in order to "describe the departure from pouring to sprinkling" is an unsupported inference from the history of the controversy at the time.

He concludes his review of Dr. Whitsitt's "Monuments" by saying: "None of the circumstances emphasized, on careful examination, seem irreconcilable with, while some strongly corroborate, the commonly-received opinion that true Baptist Churches long preceded the date fixed by the new theory." I leave it to the reader to judge of the truth of this proposition in the light of "careful examination" which I have turned upon Dr. Thomas' criticism of Dr. Whitsitt's Monuments. I affirm that he has not pulled down a single one of them; and if there is a single circumstance emphasized by Dr. Whitsitt as a monument to the fact that immersion was introduced in England in 1641, which could be reconciled with, or made to corroborate, the commonly-received opinion that true Baptist Churches, however they might have organically preceded the date of 1641, immersed before that date, Dr. Thomas has nowhere

shown the fact. Until further light, and better argument to the contrary, Dr. Whitsitt's Monuments will stand unshaken as probable evidence that about 1641 immersion, as believers' baptism, was introduced by the Baptists of England.

These monuments thoroughly establish Crosby's account of the "DISUSE" and "RESTORATION" of the "ancient practice of immersion" by the "*English Baptists*" as he denominates them, and as he details the agitation which originated in 1640 and culminated in 1641. His authority for the facts in the case are Hutchinson, Kiffin, Spilsbury, Tombes, Laurence and others. Bampfield follows with a similar detail of facts regarding the restoration of baptism by the Baptists of England; and these monuments erected by Dr. Whitsitt precisely accord with Crosby and Bampfield and the other writers cited by both.



## CHAPTER IX.

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### CONTROVERSIAL WRITINGS.

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DR. THOMAS (p.p. 39-58) discusses the subject of "Controversial Writings" including a chapter on Featley and another on Evans and de Hoop Scheffer. Since I have already touched along this line, I shall try to condense what I have to say further in a single chapter.

The controversy under consideration is that which originated about the administrator and the mode of baptism by immersion as restored at the time of Blunt, according to Crosby, Hutchinson, the Kiffin Manuscript or the Jessey Records and the Bampfield Document—the date being 1640-41. Crosby introduces the subject of this controversy in order to refute the charge of Dr. Wall and other Pedobaptists that Smyth's self-baptism succeeded to the English Baptists, (Vol. I., p. 95, 96), and he takes up eleven pages (96-107) to show, according to the Hutchinson Account and the Kiffin Manuscript—also, by the writings of Spilsbury, Tombes, Laurence and others—that, after the some time disuse of immersion in England, it was restored by the "English Baptists," and that "they did not receive their baptism from Smyth." Crosby shows (96,97) that this controversy began by the Pedobaptists with the "English Baptists" upon the agitation of the subject before they ("the Baptists") restored immersion (1641), and then he shows the continuance of this controversy by the writings of Spilsbury, Tombes, Laurence, Barber and others, from 1641 onward, in defense of the Baptist "beginning" and right to restore immersion when "disused," generally or universally corrupted, or "lost;" and the Bampfield

Document comes along in precise accord with the Crosby account, especially as to the restoration of immersion according to the Spilsbury method.

Right along with the year 1641-42, we discover Barebone, Barber, Kilcop, A.R., R.B., Featley and Kiffin, plunged into this controversy; and from 1643-44 onward, Featley, Cooke, Mabbitt, Pagitt, Saltmarsh, Knollys, Eachard, Baillie, King, Stephens, Goodwin, Parnell, Watts, Baxter, Collins, and others, both Baptists and Pedobaptists, are wrestling over the *novelty* of Baptist immersion; and the whole conflict with its varied statement and phraseology, point directly to Crosby's account of the subject in controversy which began with the Blunt movement, 1640-41. The only way to turn the present controversy against Dr. Whitsitt is to show that Crosby and Hutchinson are wrong—that the Kiffin Manuscript or the Jessey Records and the Bampfield Document are forgeries—that there was no such man as Blunt—or that the controversy of the time either belongs to another date, or has a totally different application to facts.

But Dr. Thomas takes no such position. He deals cautiously in hypothetical inferences based upon probabilities which only tend to neutralize the evidence in Dr. Whitsitt's favor; or else he deals in dubious explanations which tend to set up a counter theory of his own. Crosby's whole account and the controversy which pertains to the facts detailed, refer, according to Dr. Thomas, to an insignificant movement of Pedobaptists confined to a Pedobaptist church, which was independent of the fact that the Baptists were practicing immersion all the while; and the controversial phraseology of the time which, for more than thirty years, characterized Baptist immersion as a "novelty" and a "fresh conceit," must be viewed in the light, not of sober testimony from the witness stand, but as the "flaming rhetoric" of the "advocate" before the bar. Men like Bare-

bone, Featley, Baxter, Barber, Kilcop, King and others, spoke "elliptically," or "without careful qualification of every statement" in the "flaming rhetoric" of controversy; but whether they did or did not, Dr. Thomas invariably finds an explanation of what they say contrary to Dr. Whitsitt's thesis! So he disposes of Barber, King, the Broadmead Records, the sweeping and unmistakable characterizations of P. B. and even the plain declaration of Crosby that the "English Baptists," at a given time, "restored the ancient practice of immersion" in England. Let us see.

1. I shall commence with Crosby, where Dr. Thomas leaves off. He says that "Crosby [with Ivimey who follows Crosby] who unequivocally insists on a long-prior practice of immersion among Baptists, speaks without scruple of the 'restoration of the ancient practice of immersion' at a *later date*." The "*later date*" of which Dr. Thomas speaks, was at the time of the Blunt movement, 1641; and Crosby positively asserts in "precise accord" with the Kiffin Manuscript and the Bampfield Document, that up to that time, immersion in England "had for some time been disused." Moreover, Crosby asserts that this restoration was by the "English Baptists;" and it was not an effort simply to restore immersion as the "exclusive form of baptism" but as the "*ancient practice*" which had so long been lost that there was no one to be found who had so been baptized according to Kiffin, Bampfield and Crosby himself. That Crosby "unequivocally insists on a long-prior practice of immersion among the Baptists of England" before the "*later date*" mentioned by Dr. Thomas—and which was 1641—would be to make Crosby flatly contradict himself; and I hereby deny the affirmation of Dr. Thomas, and call him to the proof, that Crosby or Ivimey (however unreliable the latter with reference to the period in question) anywhere "insists" upon any such practice among the Baptists of England before 1641.

2. Dr. Thomas says that the "sweeping characterizations of dipping by Pedobaptist polemic writers as a 'new baptism,' a 'new discovery,' a 'fresh conceit'—must be qualified by the context or attendant circumstances, or limited in scope by the constituency addressed, in order to relieve them of ignorance, inconsistency or mendacity." For instance the phrase "new baptism" as in Eaton's case only meant "further baptism." Of course we know in this instance, that the phrase "new baptism" did not mean a "novelty," and only implied a change from infant baptism to believers' baptism; but Dr. Thomas knows well that every Pedobaptist polemic writer in the controversy of 1641 and onward meant by the "new baptism" of the Baptists a "*novelty*." He knows, also, that however Barebone's constituency might have viewed immersion as a "novelty," Barebone was not remonstrating with Pedobaptists, but with Baptists, upon the ground that they had been baptized the "third time" and that their third baptism, which was immersion, was a "new discovery," not more than "two or three years" old at the farthest.

3. To get back a little, Dr. Thomas seeks to show by the expressions of Barber, Dan'l King, and the Broadmead Records cited by Dr. Whitsitt, that they imply the prior and continued existence of immersion up to 1641.

(1). He assumes that Barber's 'language contrasting the 'dipping of Jesus Christ,' practiced by the 'Anabaptists,' with the 'dipping of infants,' taken with the statement of persistency in the truth during preceding reigns by some, plainly implies that dipping had never been abandoned." I deny that Barber's statement of "persistency in the truth" has any reference to the practice of immersion by the Baptists during the "reigns" mentioned; and I affirm, on the contrary, that Barber's claim that he had been raised up in the midst of even



ministerial ignorance on the subject to "divulge the glorious truth" of "true baptism, or dipping, coupled with his reply to Barebone in which he grants that dipping had been "destroyed and raced out, both for matter and form," and that, though a regular administration of the ordinance was lost, yet that "true believers having Christ, the Word and Spirit," have the right to raise again the raced out ordinance, proves that dipping had been abandoned in Barber's view—in precise accord with Crosby.

(2.) King's assertion that "the ordinance of Christ, which they have been deprived of by the violence and tyranny of the Man of Sin," according to Dr. Thomas, points only to the practical impossibility of the *public* administration of immersion which "had been legally and, so far as official vigilance could effect, actually raced out and destroyed, but not necessarily ignored and repudiated." "To represent a man," says he, "as 'deprived by violence' of a rite that he had no disposition to practice, or of which he had never heard, would be manifestly absurd." It is not necessary to the argument that either ignorance or indisposition be charged to the Baptists in the disuse of immersion in England; but from whatever cause immersion fell into disuse—whether by Popish violence, or by custom, or both—the historical fact remains that it was "disused," "destroyed," "raced out," and "restored" by the "English Baptists;" and King only falls, by different phraseology, into line with Crosby, Kiffin, Hutchinson, Barber, Bampfield and the rest who prove that there had been no continuance of immersion among the Anabaptists of England up to 1641. It is nowhere said that these Anabaptists "repudiated" or "ignored," or "never heard of" immersion. Whatever their practice otherwise, or their reasons for the same, their literature recognizes immersion as the Scriptural mode of baptism, only "corrupted," "disused," "lost," "raced out" and



when the conditions became favorable they "restored," "revived," "raised again" the "ancient practice." Dr. Thomas is right as to the "practical impossibility of the *public* administration of immersion and its legal and actual destruction, so far as official vigilance could effect;" but King, without qualification, employs the word "*deprived*" as expressive of the *disuse* of immersion in England, which had followed the violence and tyranny of the Man of Sin, who had universally corrupted the ordinance. King is in exact line with Spilsbury, Tombes, Laurence, Barber, Collins and others with regard to immersion as believers' baptism, "which was lost in the apostacy" of Romish tyranny and corruption, and the right to "revive" or "restore" it without succession.

(3.) Dr. Thomas also claims that the "citation" from the Broadmead Records (p. 19) implied the continuance of immersion, not only among the Anabaptists of Germany for a hundred years prior to the event cited, but also among the English Baptists, who are now said to have derived their baptism from them and who, like them, had clung to believers' baptism and had resisted the intrusion of the Romish inventions (including infant baptism), by which, according to these Records, "for a long time" the *truth* of believers' baptism" had been "buried." The occasion of this event was in 1641 at Westerleigh, near Bristol, whither John Canne went to preach, followed by a company of Pedobaptists in a transition state, and who on account of the prejudice of "a very godly great woman," was prohibited from preaching in the church in the afternoon because *he* was an "Anabaptist" preacher—a "baptized man;" and so far as history shows, there was not another Anabaptist in Westerleigh or Bristol, where there was no Baptist Church at the time, nor afterwards before 1653, when the Broadmead Church became Baptist, and when the Pithay

Church is discovered as the probable result of Canne's work in 1641. The identification of Canne with the "disreputable Anabaptists of Germany" a hundred years before was the cause of the prejudice of the "great woman;" and while Canne had probably become a Baptist at Southwark in January, 1641, and really held to immersion as believers' baptism, there is no evidence, therefore, that the German Anabaptists, or the intervening English Anabaptists up to 1641, were "baptized men" or immersionists, although they held to the "*truth* of believers' baptism," as the Broadmead Records affirm. Ever though they practiced *affusion* up to 1641, they held to the "*truth* of believers' baptism," and otherwise maintained Baptist principles, and were essentially Baptists; but there is nothing in the citation from the Broadmead Records which "contradicts Dr. Whitsitt's root proposition, that the [so called] continental ancestors of the English Baptists [which is not here implied] had abandoned immersion."

Finally, under this head, Dr Thomas (pp. 45, 46) devotes a paragraph to Featley, claimed as a witness against Dr Whitsitt. Whatever Featley's position against Anabaptist immersion as exclusive of other forms of baptism, this was not the sole ground of his opposition to their "*now* practice;" for if they had always been practicing immersion, it was as exclusive of other forms of baptism before 1641-44 as "*now*." On the contrary, Dr. Featley clearly pronounces Anabaptist immersion as the "*new* *leaven*" which "wholly sowed" the XLth Article of the Baptist Confession (1644), and if the Baptists had been continuously practicing immersion up to that date, he would not have styled it a vicious *novelty*. As Dr. Newman (Review of the Question, p. 183) says: "What Featley says about their practice of immersion refers definitely to the present, (1644)—that is, when they "flocked in

great multitudes to their Jordans, etc.”—not to twenty years before when, according to Dr. Featley, they were like the “Solifuga,” showing only his “shining head” and “speckled skin” and “thrusting out his sting” near his house in Southwark. Now, however, in 1644, “since the waters were troubled,” they were throwing the nation into confusion by their “*now practice*” of rebaptizing hundreds of men and women, and by their weekly conventicles, discussions and the like. Dr. Featley’s great complaint is, that the spiritual sword was locked up, and the temporal sword so otherwise employed that these Anabaptists could not be restrained; and it is clear that, if twenty years before these Anabaptists had been flocking in great multitudes to the rivers, openly and boldly practicing their “new leaven” as they “*now practiced*,” he would have known and seen to it that both the “temporal” and “spiritual sword,” then unlocked and well employed in persecution, had been applied to the suppression of such practice which now infuriated him.

Yes, we should have heard from Dr. Featley further back in history, not in a discussion with immersing Baptists, but in civic and ecclesiastical proceedings which would have chopped off the “shining head” of the Anabaptist “Solifuga” that then only thrust out the sprinkling “sting” of believers’ baptism, which was offensive enough to Dr. Featley, even under that form of administration and in a state of deeper seclusion. The first case of commitment to jail for the practice of believers’ immersion in England was after 1641, in 1644, in the county of Suffolk, when Laurence Clarkson was imprisoned for that offense. (Crosby, Vol. I., p. xv., Preface; Ivimey, Vol. II., p. 561.) If, after 1641, such proceedings were had against the practice of believers’ immersion, we may be sure that before that date the “spiritual” and “temporal sword”

would have been enforced with bloody severity, if there had been any such practice. There were no such practice and no such proceedings in England before 1641; and here is another monument to Dr. Whitsitt's thesis.

The Featly argument of Dr. Thomas overthrows his argument *ab ignorantia*. If the Southwark Baptists were practicing immersion before 1641, and Featley knew it, then Blunt, Lucar, Blacklock, Kiffin, Jessey, and such like knew it. But these men knew to the contrary, or else the main paragraph of the Kiffin manuscript had not been inserted; nor would Crosby and Bampfield have declared the *disuse* of immersion in England prior to 1640-41; nor would the great and prolonged controversy about the *novelty* of Baptist immersion have followed 1640-41. Therefore, Featley knew nothing of Baptist immersion before 1641; and his language on the subject applies to 1644.



## CHAPTER X.

### THE BURDEN OF PROOF.

BEFORE reaching this head, I wish to notice some things said by Dr. Thomas, which lead up to the subject under consideration. On page 46, he charges Dr. Whitsitt with confounding "things that differ" in his citation and interpretation of some passages from the literature of the time. He alludes to the case of the "two sorts of Anabaptists"—the Old Men or *Aspersi*, and the New Men or *Immersi*—in Chelmsford, which Dr. Whitsitt cites as a monument to the fact that immersion had been introduced in 1641, before which time the distinction of *Aspersi* and *Immersi* had never been known among Anabaptists. Dr. Thomas assumes that the distinction is referred, not to a *church*, but to the "people" of a "town" in which the "third part refuse to communicate in the church liturgy, etc.;" and the Doctor thinks that, of the two sorts of Anabaptists distinguished as *Aspersi* and *Immersi*, the *Aspersi* sort consisted of individuals emerging from Pedobaptist churches towards Baptist position, first rejecting infant baptism and then sprinkling, and were at either stage of progress called Anabaptists. The record implies no such intimation; and I think Dr. Evans (Vol. I. p. 52) is right when he refers the Chelmsford distinction to Baptist communities which still held, at least in part, to the affusion of the Mennonite brethren; and who says again, (*Ibid*, p. 79), that after 1646, "these New Men (or *Immersi*) soon cast them (the Old Men, or *Aspersi*) into the shade, and their practice became obsolete"—adding that "immersion, as the

mode of baptism, became the rule with both sections of the Baptist community."

Dr. Thomas says that "The question in hand is not whether all Anabaptists had been always alike, nor whether all persons, churches, or communities, reckoned as Anti-pedobaptist immersionists, in whole or in part, after 1641, had always been such, but whether there were any individuals or churches that had practiced the immersion of believers in England before that time." He protests against "appealing to the history of Pedobaptist communities or churches in transition, as if these were typical, and indeed the only, Baptist churches." He admits that many of the mixed, and some of the distinct, churches of to-day did spring out of Independent bodies; but, says he, "It is by no means clear that all did so." In reply to all of which let me say:

1. All Anti-Pedobaptists were not always alike in doctrine, polity, or baptism; but in England they were never differentiated by the distinctions of *Aspersi* and *Immersi* until after 1641.

2. All persons, churches, or communities, reckoned as Anti-Pedobaptist immersionists, in whole or in part, after 1641, had not always been such; for some of them in whole or in part, came directly from the Pedobaptists after 1641.

3. So far as the records show, immersion "had for some time been disused" in England before 1641; for up to that time "none had so practiced in England to professed believers."

4. Neither before nor after 1641, so far as I know, has any one considered Pedobaptist communities or churches "*in transition*" as typical or real Baptist churches, unless Crosby and other English historians so regarded the Jessey church.

5. Not only "many of the mixed and some of the distinct Baptist churches of to-day," in England, sprang from Independent bodies, since 1641; but,



before 1641, the original churches upon which were founded the General and Particular Baptist denominations in England, sprang from Independent bodies, according to their history.

I grant with Dr. Thomas that Independency in England owes its origin to Anabaptist ideas and polity; that the two bodies were clearly affiliated at first; that, after the Dutch Anabaptists left England, there were possibly many Anabaptists individually "intermixed," as Crosby says, with the Congregationalists, who began to separate, 1633 and onward, and form churches of their own persuasion; but there is nothing in history to show among them "composite churches," as such, in England, until after 1641. Whether there were any such churches or not, or whether all were such or not, before 1641, there is no evidence of the existence of immersion among them; and it is more than probable, if we had no direct testimony on the subject, that the Anabaptists "intermixed" with the Independents, before 1641, were like their Congregational brethren in the mode of baptism, which was unquestionably aspersion. The earliest intimation of a composite church I know of was that of Llanvaches in Wales, whither Mr. Jessey was sent, it is said, in 1639, to assist Mr. Wroth. Afterwards it was called, "A church of Independents and Baptists mixed, yet united in communion; they had two ministers, co-pastors—Mr. Wroth, an Independent, and Mr. William Thomas, a Baptist" (Broadmead Records, p. 7); but by the use of the word "Baptists" it is evident that the existence of the mixed church, as such, must have dated its beginning after 1641.

Dr. Thomas admits the "lack" of documentary evidence of historic *continuity* of Anti-Pedobaptist immersion among the early Lollards, the later Dutch, and the still later English Baptists; and he might have admitted what is true, that there is no documentary evidence of immersion among them at



all, to say nothing of "*continuity*," until the English Baptists began to immerse in 1641. It is true that Anabaptism was a "*religio illicita*" in England, hiding in "forests," "gardens" and "cellars," until 1641; but if the Anabaptists had practiced immersion, the "paucity of recorded testimony," would have been as full of this fact as of other recorded practices and doctrines by which they are clearly and voluminously distinguished. Especially is this true, if, as Dr. Thomas says, "Up to the Westminster Assembly all religious bodies in England recognized and even insisted upon immersion as normal baptism." The practice of immersion by the English Anabaptists, if such were the case, up to 1641, would have at least no more endangered them than other peculiarities well known. Such, however, was not true of believers' immersion; and if they had practiced it before 1641, as they did afterwards, we should have heard of it in tones of thunder and in flashes of lightning. It is not the history given by their enemies that robs the Anabaptists of immersion before 1641 in England: it is Baptist history which records the fact that such a practice did not exist among them—that immersion "had for some time been disused" before 1641—that "*none* had then so practiced in England to professed believers"—that the practice had been "so long disused" that "there was *no one* to be found who had so been baptized."

Dr. Thomas says: "The emphasis laid upon the fact that nobody has anywhere brought forward one instance of clearly demonstrated immersion among early Baptists, and the intimation that the holders of the new theory give themselves no concern until this is done, indicates a curious misapprehension as to the burden of proof. . . . To make good his charge, as formulated at the beginning, Dr. Whitsitt is bound to show, either by affirmative demonstration of the exclusive practice of sprinkling, or pouring,

or otherwise, that, up to the date mentioned, immersion had never been practiced among the Baptists of England. Individual instances of sprinkling among Continental Anabaptists have been aduced, but I do not recall any such in England. The holders of the current opinion may, therefore, well retort that, until one instance of early sprinkling among Baptists is clearly demonstrated, to say nothing of meeting the larger theorem, they certainly 'need give themselves no concern.'" Dr. Thomas then cites the instance given in Edward's "Gangræna" that "on the 12th of Nov. last, (1640), there met a matter of 80 Anabaptists (many of them belonging to the church of one Barber) in a great house in Bishopgate Street, and had a love feast, when five new members lately dipt were present, &c."

Dr. Thomas does not press this instance of immersion (1640) because it is "fragmentary;" but, before discussing the "burden of proof," let us grant that the incident is true. November 12, 1640, is but a little less than two months from January 9, 1641, when Blunt introduced immersion from Holland, according to the original Kiffin Manuscript, or the Jessey Records; and Dr. Newman has well suggested that the Anti-successionists may have begun to immerse, according to their theory and method, upon the agitation for the restoration of immersion by Blunt and others, May 3rd, mo., 1640. Practically the Gangræna incident, even if true as to date or fact, does not affect Dr. Whitsitt's thesis.\*

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\*It was Jan. (11th mo.) 1640, (O. S.), 1641, (N. S.), when Blunt and Blacklock baptized the seceding members of Jessey's and Spilsbury's congregations; and, in the light of the Kiffin Manuscript and the Crosby Account, it is probable that Nov. 12, 1640, (O. S.), was Nov. 12, 1641, (N. S.), when the "five new members" were "lately dipt." Whether or not this be true, it is probable, according to Dr. Newman, that the Blunt agitation, May, 1640, had led the Anti-successionists to the introduction of immersion before Blunt returned from the Netherlands, according to the theory and method of Spilsbury and others who repudiated the succession scheme—the Blunt theory and method having historic precedence on account of priority of movement and agitation.

But now as to the "burden of proof." I reply that Dr. Whitsitt, if from no other standpoint, has made out his case upon the ground of circumstantial evidence; and conviction upon that ground may be as strong and legitimate as by direct testimony--if, which is not true, such had been wanting in the case. Nobody has proven by documentary evidence the existence of a single case of immersion among the Baptists of England before 1640-41, the period claimed by Dr. Whitsitt, even upon probability; but it is also claimed that he has not proved a single case of sprinkling, or pouring, among them before that time. Evans holds to the probability upon documentary evidence, that the English Anabaptists practiced aspersion before that period—and Dr. Armitage holds likewise with some of them. Besides this, the Kiffin Manuscript makes the negative declaration that "none," up to that time, had "practiced" immersion in England to "professed believers;" and while this is a negative declaration, it implies the positive affirmation that immersion, in England, had, up to 1641, been abandoned, or disused among the Baptists as "believers" baptism. In confirmation of this fact, and in the use of the Kiffin Manuscript and other documents, Crosby positively affirms that, up to the Blunt Movement, immersion in England "had for some time been disused." He quotes writers who speak of its "general," or "universal corruption," and he goes on to show that it was restored by the "English Baptists," according to Kiffin and other writers. Bampfield, evidently referring to the same event, positively confirms the fact that immersion in England had been "so long disused" that there were none to be found who had been "so baptized." The great controversy which followed its introduction, after 1641, goes to show that it was a "novelty" among the Baptists—charged by Pedobaptists and admitted and defended by Baptists whom Crosby shows

had a baptismal "reformation" and "beginning" at this time.

If this is not about as clear a case as could be made out, both from circumstantial and positive evidence, then I do not know what a clear case is upon what seems to me more than probable testimony. How, then, does the case stand when summed up?

1. Negatively it is shown that immersion, as believers' baptism, was not practiced by the Baptists of England before 1641; and positively that as such it had become "disused," "corrupted," "destroyed," "raced out" before that time.

2. But the Baptists were baptizing before that period, since we know that some had received a "further" or a "new baptism" on leaving the Jacob Church, and that Spilsbury "baptized Sam Eaton and others."

3. Therefore, if immersion as believers' baptism was "disused" before 1641, the Baptists who baptized, nevertheless, must have practiced aspersion or affusion for baptism, as Dr. Evans clearly shows to be probable.

But it is claimed, after all, that this was but an opinion, *ab ignorantia*, and that this universal declaration is not susceptible of proof, since there might have been some churches or individuals unknown in England who were practicing believers immersion before 1641. That may be possible, but the declaration is sufficient for all historical purposes from what was generally known of the facts in the case, and so far as they related to the Baptist Churches then recognized, and from whom Baptist history, as such, is made up. If there were any exceptions to the "general" or "universal corruption" of immersion as believers' baptism in England, they were unknown to history at the time; and if those exceptions have not been discovered since, the history, as such, stands good. Even if you could prove

the exception to the general fact declared, it would in no way affect the history of the case, as it applies to the General and Particular Baptists of England. Their fifty churches at 1641 come under this general declaration; and they were constitutively called the "Baptists of England," the "English Baptists" who, Crosby says, restored immersion, as believers' baptism in England at the time of Blunt, which was 1640-41. If there were any other churches then practicing immersion in England, there is no evidence of the fact; and what is claimed for a few of such, upon tradition, certainly did not then appear, and cut no figure in the restoration movement. If such are now numbered with the English Baptist body, they were absorbed in it after 1641, and they constitute no basis upon which to found baptismal or church succession which Crosby shows the great Baptist body repudiated at their revival of immersion in England. Such a claim at that time, as to baptism, was only made by the smaller movement of Blunt and those with him; and they received it from a foreign country in 1641, because it could not be found in England, according to Kiffin, Hutchinson, Bampfield, Crosby and others. Historically speaking, Dr. Whitsitt's thesis is clearly established both upon negative and positive testimony—consistent all the way through.



## CHAPTER XI.

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EVANS, MULLER, DE HOOP SCHEFFER.

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DR. THOMAS (pp. 51-58) seeks to break the force of Evans, Muller and de Hoop Scheffer, as authority in favor of Dr. Whitsitt's thesis, that the Dutch Anabaptists were not immersionists, and that Smyth, Helwisse and Company were affusionists after the manner of the Mennonite brethren. Whatever the view of Evans that some of the Dutch Baptists practiced immersion, at the time in question, he agrees with Muller that the Smyth faction which had been "self-baptized" joined the Netherland Waterlanders who were Arminians in the doctrine of salvation and affusionists in the practice of baptism, no difference having been found between them in theology, church government, nor in the *design* and *mode* of baptism. Those who had not already been baptized were received by "sprinkling;" and the logical inference is that those of the faction already baptized had been sprinkled. "Birds of a feather flock together." If Smyth and his party had been immersionists they would not have sought membership in a sprinkling church—especially if, as Dr. Thomas assumes, they were surrounded by Dutch Baptists who exclusively immersed, and to whom they could have more consistently applied for membership. No immersion Baptist church, or faction of the same, ever yet joined a church of sprinklers under the confession, or otherwise, that there was no difference between them and the sprinklers in doctrine nor practice. Baptists of 1641 went from aspersion to immersion; but there never was a Baptist body, seeking as



Smyth was for "succession," that went backwards from immersion to sprinkling to find it.

Dr. Thomas does not deny that the Mennonite Waterlanders sprinkled, nor that the unbaptized portion of Smyth's party were sprinkled. In fact, Dr. Muller says: "This mode of baptism was from the days of Menno the only usual mode amongst us. The Waterlanders *nor any* of the various parties of the Netherland *Dooopsgezinden* (Baptists) practiced *at any time* immersion." Nevertheless, Dr. Thomas seems to think that Dr. Muller qualifies himself in the added sentence which says: "But they (the Waterlanders) cared only for *the very nature* of the baptism, (as founded on full ages) and were therefore willing to admit those who were *baptized by a mode differing from theirs*, just as we are wonted to do nowadays." He seems to think that this sentence might imply that Smyth and his followers who had already been baptized and so received were immersed; that immersion would have been regarded by the Waterlanders as not of any material difference in "form and foundation" with sprinkling; that the "usual" practice of the Mennonites had been sprinkling, but immersion, though not ordinarily practiced, was not wholly rejected; and that the observations of Dr. Muller were here limited simply to the *Dooopsgezinden* who comprised only a single section of the Netherland Anabaptists. To all of which I reply:

1. It is impossible for Dr. Muller to mean that Smith or his followers already baptized and so received by the Waterlanders, had been immersed, since "no difference," in the one thing nor the other, was found between them in the "*foundation and form*" (design and mode) of baptism, to begin with. They were alike in theory that baptism belonged to believers only—the "very nature" or design of the ordinance; but while this theory might have been equally applicable to sprinkling and immersion in



the conception of the Waterlanders, Dr. Muller does not imply for this reason that though the form was immaterial there was no difference in form; nor that there was any difference in the form of baptism between them and Smyth's party already baptized. Besides this, Evans (vol. II., p. 52) says that Dr. Muller "*fully agrees*" with Ashton, the editor of Robinson's Works, (vol. III., p. 461) who says: "Immersion baptism does not appear to have been practiced or pleaded for by either Smyth or Helwisse, the alleged founder of the General Baptist denomination in England. Nothing appears in these controversial writings to warrant the supposition that they regarded immersion as the proper and only mode of administering the ordinance. Incidental allusions there are, in their own works and in the replies of Robinson, that the baptism performed on himself, must have been rather by effusion or pouring."

2. While the Waterlanders evidently regarded no "*material* difference" between sprinkling and immersion as to the "*very nature*" of baptism, it is clear that they did recognize a *formal* difference which, if it had existed between them and Smyth's party, they would have expressed it.

3. The mode of baptism, according to Dr. Muller, among the Mennonites, was *then as now* the "usual" mode; but, says he: "The Waterlanders, (to whom the Smyth party joined) nor *any* other of the various parties of the Netherland *Dooopsgezinden* practiced *at any time* baptism by immersion;" and whatever the implication by the word "usual" that there might have been some exception to the rule of sprinkling among the Dutch Baptists in general, then as now, it is explicitly affirmed that the Waterlanders and all the parties of the Netherland *Dooopsgezinden*, from the days of Menno, always without exception, sprinkled.

4. Hence, it is not clear that Dr. Muller confines

his observations simply to the Waterlanders since he uses this language: "This mode of baptizing was, *from the days of Menno*, the only *usual* mode amongst *them*, and still is amongst *us*;" and then, without the qualification of "*usual*," he shows that the Netherland *Doopsgezinden* sprinkled altogether. He seems to refer to the mode of baptism among the Mennonites in general and among the Waterlanders in particular; or else there is no significance implied in the use of the qualifying term "*usual*."

What then is the significance of the added sentence: "But they cared only for the *very nature* of baptism, and were therefore willing to admit those who were baptized by a *mode differing from theirs*, just as we are wonted to do now-a-days?" In the intervening sentence he shows that no exception was made in sprinkling the English, and that, if there had been, it is "more than probable that the memorial would have made mention of the alteration," and it is evident that Dr. Muller was seeking to emphasize the fact to Dr. Evans that sprinkling and not immersion was the mode not only by which the unbaptized portion of Smyth's party was received by the Waterlanders, but that this was the mode of those already baptized—their being found "no difference" between them as to design or mode. The added sentence seems to be appended only to explain, nevertheless, that the Waterlanders then, as the Mennonites now, were not illiberal or narrow in the matter; that they regarded only "*the very nature*" of baptism as the essence of the ordinance; and that, other things being equal, the English would have been received, though "baptized by a mode differing from theirs," if it had not been true that there was already "no difference" between them in the "foundation and form," the design and mode of baptism when received. Otherwise Dr. Muller would contradict himself; and otherwise it would be impossible for him to "*fully agree*" with the editor

of Robinson's Works that Smyth and Helwisse appear neither to have pleaded for, nor practiced immersion, and that Smyth was self-baptized by affusion and not immersion.

Dr. Thomas concludes that there is nothing here in conflict with the affirmation of Evans "that there were a portion of the Dutch Baptists (at the time in question) who uniformly administered baptism by immersion." In the same note he might have quoted the editor of Robinson's Works (vol. I, p. 203) who asserts that Smyth and his party were "surrounded by Dutch Baptists who uniformly administered baptism by immersion;" but on this point both Evans and Ashton are evidently in conflict with Muller and de Hoop Scheffer who have made a study of the subject from the archives of the Mennonites themselves. From the same page onward, however, Evans proceeds to lay before us the facts and arguments at length by which he at last concludes (vol. II, p. 52) that the probabilities are greatly in favor of the "opinion expressed" by the editor of Robinson's Works, with whom, he says, "Dr. Muller *fully agrees.*" If anything is clear, it is that both Evans and Muller are of the "opinion," the "conclusion more than warranted," that Smyth, Helwisse and their followers were self-baptized by affusion, and that the Dutch Anabaptists with whom the Smyth party joined and with whom the Helwisse Churches continued to affiliate up to 1641 in England, practiced sprinkling for baptism, as already shown heretofore.

The opinion of Price that Smyth was convinced that immersion was the scriptural mode of baptism, and so broke with the Brownists—the opinion of Masson that the "Helwisse folk differed from the Independents on the subject of dipping" have no foundation except in the "oral tradition" which Dr. Thomas says Crosby followed on the subject. That "oral tradition" has been swept away by the histor-

ical research of Evans, Muller, Ashton, de Hoop Scheffer, Dexter, Whitsitt, Newman, Vedder, Burrage and others, and by the very writings and confession of Smyth himself. Smyth and his followers join in the confession of self-baptism in Holland; and when charged with self-baptism Smyth argued against his opponents without denying the charge, that "*for baptizing a man's self there is as good warrant as for a man churching himself.*"\*

In none of the writings and confessions of Smyth and Helwisse, however they repudiate infant baptism and defend believers' baptism, do they anywhere prescribe immersion as did the Poland Anabaptists 1574, the Collegiants, 1620, and the English Baptists, 1644, by specific articles of faith. It is simply incredible that Smyth should break with the Brownists—that Helwisse should antagonize the Independents—in favor of immersion as opposed to sprinkling, in favor of believers' baptism as opposed to infant baptism, and yet define themselves distinctly as to the subjects of baptism without reference to the mode, when the mode was just as much a matter of difference between them as the subjects. It will not do to argue, even if it were true, that in Holland Smyth was surrounded by immersing Anabaptists—that immersion prevailed in the English Church—and that, therefore, Smyth and Helwisse took immersion for granted. If they were in conflict with sprinkling among the Brownists and Independents they could not, as to them, take immersion for granted; and even if they had, we should discover somewhere that they opposed sprinkling just as well as infant baptism which would have implied that they were

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\*The fact that the English Baptists seek to find their origin in the Epworth and Crowle fraud by such writers as John Clifford and others of the present day (The English Baptists, etc., p. 16), shows the utter unreliability of Baptist history at the hands of partizan authority. John Smyth was certainly a Pedobaptist in 1606 according to his own writings, and he certainly never was immersed in the river Don by John Morton.

immersionists, which is not the case. Think of Smyth, an immersionist, after a conflict with the Brownists upon the subject of sprinkling, at last seeking membership in a sprinkling Mennonite Church; and that, too, when surrounded by immersing Anabaptist Churches! The whole thing is absurd.

Dr. Thomas very sarcastically disposes of de Hoop Scheffer. He is characterized as a "writer unduly athletic in fancy" and "paralytic in vision of historical fact"—a "notable savant" badly affected with "intellectual strabismus"—illustrated by his general survey of baptismal history and specifically cognizant in his affirmations with reference to Uolimann and the Polish Anabaptists. Except in this form Dr. Thomas does not attempt, under this head, to meet the affirmations of Scheffer with reference to a "questioned date in English history," nor with reference to the "final solution of problems of continental breadth" concerning the baptismal question. So far as I can see, neither here nor elsewhere does Dr. Thomas assail the positions of Scheffer or any other author quoted by Dr. Whitsitt except by hypothetical inferences which aim to neutralize rather than directly disprove a thesis, the probabilities of which, at least, have the show of great credibility. He neither proves that the example of Uolimann's immersion in the Rhine *was* followed by any other person, nor that the adoption of immersion by the Polish Anabaptists was not due to local influences or to the neighborhood of the Greek Church. Scheffer certainly has, by means of the Dutch Archives, thrown great light upon the subject of early Dutch and English Baptist baptism—proving that it was affusion; and, in general, he seems confirmed by the late work of Dr. Newman on the History of Antipedobaptism, in the fact that affusion and not immersion was the usual practice of the Anabaptists on the Continent early in the Sixteenth century. As

to the two dates which he fixed for the restoration of immersion in England, like any scholar, he was liable to mistake in his original investigation, but like the true scholar, he changed his view upon a second and more patient investigation under the suggestions of Dr. Whitsitt.

It is a great mistake for Baptists to wholly reject the historical testimony of those we are disposed to regard as our enemies who sometimes tell the truth. It is equally as great a mistake to wholly adopt every thing our own partizan historians naturally say of us. The truth generally lies between the extremes of partizan statement on both sides of disputed questions in Baptist history. I delight in finding Baptists and Baptist history in every Christian age and country; but through the mists of obscure periods and conflicting testimony, it behoves us to weigh carefully and judge impartially, as well what our enemies say as what we ourselves want to believe. Our enemies do not always lie—and we do not always tell the truth.





## CHAPTER XII.

### DUTCH ANTI-PEDOBAPTISM.

DR. THOMAS (pp. 59-74) deals more directly with Continental and Dutch Antipedobaptism. He does not stop to discuss Lollardism or the English Anabaptists during the early reign of Henry VIII who, he rightly says, could not have been Mennonites; for, as Dr. Newman says, the early Anabaptists of England were ‘of the Hoffmanite type’ and the later were ‘of the Mennonite type’—both affusionists.

1. Dr. Thomas assumes that “it is yet too early to attempt a positive account of their doings and wholly impossible to verify sweeping negations against them.” He may be partly correct as to this proposition; and I see no reason to differ with him in what he quotes from Cornelius, Keller and Griffis. I believe with them that the evangelical life which projected the Reformation was Anabaptist; and I am proud to accept the fact that the Constitution of the United States is “an Anabaptist Document.” I grant also that the word “dip” is only the Dutch “*doepen*,” the German “*taufen*,” and that whether “everybody dipped” or not when these words were first introduced in Bible translation, it was understood that they meant “dip.” The Catholics, the Reformers themselves, Luther, Zuingle, Melancthon, Casaubon, Grotius, Jurieu, all admitted that baptism in the Scriptures meant to “dip,” though they practiced to the contrary. The Roman Catholics so teach to-day, as then. No doubt the early Anabaptists, if not the later, so understood the meaning of the word, as their literature usually shows; but the facts of history demonstrate that

the Anabaptists generally, like the Catholics and Reformers of the Sixteenth Century, did not regard immersion as the sole and only mode of baptism, so far as their *practice* was concerned.

2. I see no reason to disagree with Dr. Thomas in the probability that the Holland Anabaptists and those of South Germany may have had a derivative connection with the Swiss Anabaptists. Grant also that Grebel and Manz visited Munster in 1523; that Hoffman and Rink spent half a year at Zurich; that they had been the disciples of Grebel and Manz; that Hoffman and Rink were the fathers of the Holland Anabaptism; and yet there is no evidence that they ever introduced immersion in Holland as the result of their Swiss discipleship under Grebel and Manz at Zurich. After the council at Zurich, about December 1624, the Anabaptist leaders proceeded to "introduce believer's baptism," led by Grebel, who first baptized Blaurock, who in turn baptized large numbers, all by pouring. At the same time Manz baptized Bruggbach and others by pouring from a dipper of water. In April, 1525, Uolimann, not content with being poured upon from a dish, insisted upon being immersed in a river by Grebel, who seems afterward to have followed the practice at St. Gall, (*History Antipedobaptism* by Newman, pp. 107, 108, 114, 115). That Manz ever immersed is not susceptible of historic proof; and hence at the time of Hoffman's and Rink's visit to Zurich and of their pupilage under Grebel and Manz, which must have occurred in 1523 or 1524, if at all, they could not have become immersionists for their great tutors were affusionists up to the time they left Zurich at the close of 1524. This is also evident in the history of Hoffman himself, who was not an immersionist but an affusionist in practice.\*

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\*There is no reliable authority for immersion at Zurich as Dr. Thomas holds; and none such to show that Manz was drowned on

3. Dr. Thomas asserts that the "early history of the Anabaptists of Holland, as well as elsewhere, distinctly and strongly insists upon immersion." Here, after touching the obscurity of Anabaptist history and its perversion by bitter partizans, he comes to the history of the Mennonites, the main question at issue. The quotations from Hunziger (1830) and from Spanheim (1757) prove nothing in the light of specific facts to the contrary, drawn from original sources by expert historians, who now declare that the Mennonites never did immerse and who, while they still exist, do not now immerse. Is it not an incredible thing that this body of Christians should have once been immersion Baptists and have afterwards turned to sprinkling? Dr. Muller, a Mennonite scholar, affirms that neither the "Waterlanders, nor any other of the various parties of the Netherland *Doopsgezinden* practiced at any time baptism by immersion." Prof. Scheffer, another Dutch antiquary and scholar, declares that the Mennonites never practiced immersion. Drs. Evans, Newman, Vedder, Burrage, Whitsitt, expert Baptist historians affirm, in the light of the best modern research, the same proposition.

But let us come to Menno himself, to whom Dr. Thomas invites attention (p. 64). He quotes the oft repeated passage from Menno's works, as follows: "Beloved reader, take heed to the word of the Law, for this also Paul teaches, etc.: even as Christ died and was buried, so also ought we to die unto our sins, and be buried with Christ in baptism, etc., (citing Romans vi:5-7). . . . Again, Paul calls baptism the washing of regeneration! O Lord!

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account of being an immersionist. He sprinkled according to his own teaching and practice; and the custom of drowning among the Germaus and Swiss had no reference to immersion in Manz's case, but to the practice of believer's baptism as opposed to infant baptism. Drowning was the penalty for several offenses against the State, such as robbery, adultery and the like, and was long in vogue before the Reformation. It was especially employed against women, as being the easiest mode of execution by death.

how lamentably thy word is abused! Is it not greatly to be lamented that men are attempting, notwithstanding these plain passages, to maintain their idolatrous invention of infant baptism, and set forth that infants are regenerated thereby, as if regeneration was simply a plunging in water?" Along with this passage we take another from Menno's "Foundation Book," (p. 22) in which he refers to baptism as receiving a "handful of water," which Dr. Thomas concedes as "equivocal," at least; but the Doctor then goes on to assume, however, that Menno's citation of Romans vi:5-7, is determinative of the form of baptism and is characteristic of Anabaptist literature in all its early stages. He finds it in the Protocol of Emden, 1578; in the Protocol of Frankenthal, 1571, in which baptism is explained as the "symbol of death and new life;" in the Confession of Jacques d'Auchy Leeuwarden, 1559; in the Munster "Restitution," 1634, in which baptism is described as the "burial of the sinful flesh;" and in the Berne "Disputation," 1532, in which the "Touffer" says: "Baptism is always a symbol of a renewed man entombed into the death of Jesus Christ."

Before considering these authorities from the earlier literature of the Anabaptists, I wish to add another quoted and translated in full along the same line by Dr. Thomas. I allude to the Confession of the "Two Sacraments" issued by Rothmann and his colleagues at Munster, 1533. I need not give the whole translation secured by Dr. Thomas, but I give enough of it to show its characterization of the entire literature of the Anabaptists. It reads as follows: "*What the word doop means.* Every Dutsche knows, of course, the meaning of *doopen* (to dip) and consequently also of *doop* and *doopsel* (dipping). *Doopen* is as much as to say to dip or immerse in, or *besprinkling* with water. Now this word *doop*, by reason of its natural signification, may be used

of all and every kind of dipping. But in the Christian sense there is not more than one sort of dipping in water, that can be called doop, which is when a person is dipped according to the command of Christ; otherwise, if it be done in a manner, or with intent differing from what Christ and his apostles practiced, it may literally or naturally be called a doop, but it can never be regarded as doop in the Christian sense, etc." Baptism is defined as an immersion in water, received as a token of death to sin, buried with Christ, and a resurrection to new life, just as Baptists regard it; and but for the sprinkling clause given in the first part of the definition, side by side with immersion, this confession would be perfect. Let us, however, view the subject, as set forth in all these details of Anabaptist literature, in the light of their *practice* and this will relieve the difficulty which shrouds the history in question in so much obscurity to the minds of those who have not properly studied the subject.

1. Let us begin with the Rothmann Confession and go back to Menno. In the first place this confession, so far as baptism is concerned, is vitiated by "*sprinkling*" which, notwithstanding the otherwise perfect definition as immersion, is made to occupy an alternative form of baptism; but what is more remarkable, the Confession never went into effect at Munster. The authors of the Confession were never themselves immersed, nor practiced immersion; and according to the evidence of eye witnesses the mode of baptism which prevailed at Munster at the time was by "pouring three handfulls of water on the kneeling candidates." (*Hist. Antipedobaptism*, p.p. 282, 286); (*Quest. in Bap. Hist.*, p.p. 42-44); (*Cornelius, Berichte, etc.*, p. 20).

2. Leading Anabaptists of the period in question are known to have practiced affusion. At Waldshut (1525) Hubmair, the greatest leader of the

Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century, "publicly baptized out of a milk pail over 300 believers." (Hist. Antipedobaptism, p. 126). Hubmair describes the act of baptism, thus: "To baptize *in water* is to *pour outward water over the confessor of his sins*, in accordance with the divine command, etc. So has John baptized." (A Quest. in History, p. 36—quoted from Von dem Christenlichen, etc., p. 5.) Hoffman, the father of the Dutch Anabaptists, 1530, in the sacristy of the Church at Emden openly administered baptism by pouring and, according to Hast, upon the authority of Ubbo Phillips, it is asserted that Hoffman baptized 300 persons out of a large bucket on this occasion. (Geschichte, etc., p. 255). See also Hist. Antipedobaptism, p. 266, as to Hoffman's use of a room in a church where he publicly baptized. From the writings of Hubmair and Hoffman, we are led to infer their conception of baptism as immersion or "in water," and yet with the prevailing custom of the time and indifference as to mode, they practiced affusion, just as Rothmann and other leaders did at Munster, and just as Grebel, Manz, Blaurock and others did in Switzerland. Dr. Whitsitt (Quest. Bap. Hist., p.p. 44,45), cites a number of instances, 1534-35, at Maastricht, Holland, where the Anabaptists practiced affusion; and so in Wessel, Holland, during the period in question, according to the authority of Joseph Habets and Bouterwek. In the Canton of Berne, in Moravia, in Austria, Bavaria, Swabia, Franconia and other countries on the Continent the early Anabaptists of the Sixteenth Century practiced affusion according to Dr. Newman in his review of the "Whitsitt Controversy" and in his "History of Antipedobaptism," which is an exhaustive and accurate research along the line in question.

3. This brings us to Menno at a later date when he united the broken fragments of the Anabaptists



under the name of Mennonites in Holland, 1534-35. Like the rest he defines baptism in scriptural terms and yet represents it as receiving "a handful of water," which according to Scheffer meant simply the pouring of water which was the custom of the Anabaptists during the first half of the sixteenth century, both in Switzerland and upper Germany, as a rule, and which seems to have been almost, if not, universal in Holland. Dr. Newman (*Hist. Antipedobaptism*, p. 302) says: "It seems almost certain that Menno did not require or practice immersion. In his 'Foundation Book, (p. 22, folio Dutch edition of his works) he refers to the act of baptism as receiving 'a handful of water.' The passage in his treatise on Christian Baptism (p. 400), sometimes supposed to assert the exclusive validity of immersion cannot possibly be so interpreted. The author is simply insisting upon believers' baptism as 'the only baptism in water that is well pleasing to God,' to the exclusion of infant baptism. Yet in this same treatise he speaks repeatedly of 'baptizing in water,' and of baptism as a 'water bath,' and he does not hesitate to employ the symbolism of burial and resurrection in connection with the ordinance. On page 419, he repudiates the idea of the miserable world (referring to his Pedobaptist opponents, Catholic and Protestant), that 'a plunging (duyken) in water,' is equivalent to the new birth. While perfectly familiar with immersion as the primitive form of baptism, he was probably content with affusion, the practice of the later Mennonites as well."

Thus it is discovered that while the early Anabaptists "distinctively and strongly" seemed to "insist" upon immersion in their literature, their practice was generally to the contrary. "To be *baptized in water*," with Hubmair, was simply "to *pour outward water* over the confessor of his sins"—the word *uebergiessen*, to "*pour over*," being used. With Rothmann and his Colleagues, in the "Confession of

the Two Sacraments," "*immersion*" and "*be sprinkling with water*" were alike synonymous with baptism; and so Menno could define baptism scripturally as a symbolic burial and resurrection, and yet represent baptism as the receiving of a "handful of water." So no doubt of the other similar specimens of Anabaptist literature quoted by Dr. Thomas from the sixteenth century. The truth is that early Anabaptist literature pays but little attention to the subject of immersion which, in view of the prevalence of sprinkling on the continent, would be remarkable indeed if the Anabaptists were immersionists; but the mystery is explained by the fact that, while they recognized immersion as the scriptural form of baptism and so wrote, they, like other Christians, practiced sprinkling or pouring themselves.\*

In their zeal for "believers' baptism" as opposed to "infant baptism" they lost sight of the mode; and Hoffman went so far as to issue a proclamation *suspending baptism for two years altogether*, in order to popularize the principles of Antipedobaptism. It seems that the entire Christian world, in the Sixteenth Century, fell under the sprinkling spell, and it was only the Baptists who in 1641 finally recovered from the practice in England, while the Protestants, like the Catholics, permanently lost immersion.

There is no evidence of any discussion among the Anabaptists on the subject of immersion, and only occasional allusions to it, up to 1574, when the Poland brethren adopted an immersion creed; and it is evident, up to that time, that they had no vigorous convictions as to the baptismal mode. They did

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\*They evidently took the view that while immersion was the *mode*, it was not of the *substance* of baptism which, to them, meant the application of water as the symbolic cleansing of sin—and therefore death to sin and newness of life illustrated by immersion. They were Baptists, however, in person and principle, although they did not always wear the Baptist uniform as they ought to have done. A man may be *essentially* a Baptist in principle though not *technically* a Baptist in form and *vice versa*.

sporadically, here and there, practice immersion as at St. Gall, in the river Sitter, at Strasburg and Augsburg, and perhaps other places; but the evidence is to the contrary of any ordinary or general practice of immersion anywhere among them. Their great leaders were affusionists with little if any exception, even to Menno himself; and it was not until 1574 in Poland, 1620 in Holland, and 1641 in England that the Anabaptists distinctively changed to immersion by a restoration of the ordinance as having been "lost," "corrupted," "disused"—not as something new, but "ancient."

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Upon the whole, and in conclusion, I plant myself upon Crosby's position, that, prior to 1640-41, immersion as believers' baptism, "had for some time been disused" in England; and that the "antient practice" was "restored," at that period, by what he designates the "English Baptists" as a body and without distinction, except as to Successionists and Anti-successionists. I also adopt his clear intimation that the ordinance had also been lost in Holland, where, he says, the Foreign Protestants "*had used immersion for some time*" only, when Blunt was sent for it to the Collegiants, who had lately restored it in 1620. (Vol. I., pp. 97, 102.) Crosby is right as to the disuse and restoration of immersion both in England and on the Continent among the Anti-pedobaptists.



## CHAPTER XIII.

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### REVOLUTION AND EVOLUTION.

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REVOLUTIONS are the safety valves of society. Sometimes they are gradual and peaceful—again sudden and explosive. They are the result of retarded or suppressed truth, and of long dominating errors; and sometimes like the cyclone and the blizzard, they come to relieve stagnation and restore the equilibrium, the purity and the truth-developing elements latent in the moral and spiritual atmosphere. They are necessary to a world engulfed in evil; essential to the perpetual development of truth and righteousness, however potent in themselves, or harnessed and operated of God. As in the natural so in the supernatural economies. The history of this world is a checkered series of triumphant consummations and engulfing cataclysms, from the Garden of Eden to the Millennium; and the only solution of the social, political and religious problems, in the singular revolutions of time, is the Cross of Cavalry. Jesus Christ is the secret of history and the explanation of all its revolutionary mysteries and results.

The Baptist Denomination is the creature of revolution and evolution; and it has ever and will ever continue to be the mighty factor in the great religious revolutions of the ages, in the machinery of whose moral and spiritual movements it is the balance wheel within the wheel of Providence. We are not a reformation, but an evolution from the apostles till now; and yet within ourselves we have been the subject of many revolutions and reformations through our long and checkered course of development. From the Second to the Twelfth Cen-

tury we were the anti-Catholic sects in conflict with baptismal regeneration, infant baptism, hierarchy, impure churchism, unevangelical life—developing through crude forms and elemental variations from which we can distinguish Baptist traces, and which planted the seeds of truth for a higher and better evolution. The Anabaptists of the Twelfth and succeeding centuries were still nearer Baptist—projecting a more evangelical doctrine and life into the deadly darkness of the Mediaeval Ages—opening up a broader and clearer way to the great Antipedobaptist movement and Reformation of the Sixteenth Century; and while their development was irregular in outward form and method—often widely apart or broken up—yet through all their checkered way and fiery ordeal we discover our people, more or less distinct, still persistent in Baptist principle and purpose towards the ultimate end and outcome of a still higher and better evolution. From the Sixteenth to the middle of the Seventeenth Century, the star of Antipedobaptism rose and relumed with a brighter, steadier ray, though oft obscured by error within or persecution without, until it fixed its more evangelical orbit in the name, the principles and the practices of the Baptist Denomination of England; and then it almost ceased ere long to shine over the Continental provinces where, through so many ages, it waxed and waned until it was well nigh extinguished in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries.

Even in England since the Seventeenth Century the course of Baptist development has been revolutionary and irregular; and up to the present time there is but a small section of the denomination which has so far separated from the main body as to be called strictly Baptist according to gospel principle and practice. Nevertheless great strides have been made in learning, liberty, Sunday school, missionary, benevolent and other forms of evangel-

ical life and activity since the middle of the Seventeenth Century; and it is to the glory especially of the Calvinistic Baptists of England that they were foremost in every struggle for freedom, and that, in 1793, they projected the first great foreign missionary movement in modern times. A large body of the English Baptists, however, are on the "down grade," and without a revolution and a reformation, the time is not far distant when the "Baptist Union" will dissolve in doctrinal chaos—another evidence that Baptists cannot exist apart from doctrinal truth as well as evangelical life.

America became the congenial soil for the implantation of Baptist principles, about the same time that Antipedobaptism became triumphant under the name of the Baptist denomination of England. Here we began a career of purer scriptural orthodoxy and life; and yet our evolution towards a higher perfection in education and activity has been characterized by many changes and reformations within ourselves. We inherited the spirit of freedom from our English brethren in the great contest for political and religious liberty in America, in which, as a denomination, we were foremost and almost alone; and in which, according to Dr. Griffis, the proud compliment was won that the constitution of the United States is "an *Anabaptist* document." We also followed our English brethren in the exercise of an enlarged missionary spirit and in the adoption of organized methods for the extension of the gospel to all the world; and in the exercise of our theory and plan of missionary operations we have undergone a revolutionary or reformatory change in separating from the anti-missionary elements which hampered the great work. In 1845, Northern and Southern Baptists revolutionized again and separated upon the slavery question; and the question thus agitated between the two sections was only settled by the bloody arbitrament of the



sword in which Baptists and all other Christians engaged on both sides of the conflict.

Since 1845 in the South the great "Landmark" question originated among Baptists and we have been sharply divided, though not separated, upon the "succession" theory upon which the Landmark idea is now essentially based. In the North, and largely in the South, however, there has remained a strong conservative element of Baptists who oppose the "high church" idea and occupy the position of the denomination up to 1845; and it is to this conservative element we must look for the continued normal development of our people towards evangelical spirit and principle which have always characterized true Baptist history—avoiding the extreme of *literalism* on the one hand and *liberalism* on the other.

More recently the Landmark or Succession movement has assumed a more pronounced attitude in view of the Whitsitt Question. Many anti-successionists or anti-landmarkers disagree with Dr. Whitsitt; but the Successionists or Landmarkers universally oppose Dr. Whitsitt on the theory that both scripture and history demand "the orderly and unbroken succession of Baptist churches from the Apostles till now" Dr. Whitsitt and those who agree with him, therefore, are pronounced, "heretics," "traitors," "Judases" and the like; and of late the battle cry has been raised: "*The soul of J. R. Graves goes marching on.*" With the sounding of this mighty slogan we are warned that the Landmark line of battle is specifically drawn upon the "Whitsitt Question;" and others are appealing to the *shades of Broadus, Boyce, Fuller, Jeter, Burrows*, and others on the other side of the line.

In conformity with the battle cry of the Successionists, the Kentucky Baptist General Association, followed in Spirit by the Mississippi and Louisiana Baptist Conventions, passed resolutions requesting

Dr. Whitsitt's resignation chiefly upon the ground of his historical theory; and all this, too, in the face of a peaceful adjustment of the matter at the Southern Baptist Convention, in the Board of the Seminary Trustees, the only body having jurisdiction of the matter, and in which the opposition concerned clearly acquiesced. Hence, we are in the vortex of another revolution unless the difficulty can be otherwise peacefully adjusted; for some are privately and publicly demanding that the Seminary shall *now* be placed under Landmark control—not simply that Dr. Whitsitt shall be removed. The Landmark question still lives; and it is *the* question, above all others, which now confronts the "Whitsitt Question." The rallying cry in the name of the great J. R. Graves, followed by the speedy action of the Kentucky and other general bodies, based chiefly upon Dr. Whitsitt's "theory," are in evidence of the fact; and I could cite, if necessary, many public and private utterances in proof of my assumption.

I am reminded of Galileo before the Inquisition of Rome. "The Scriptures teach," said Rome, "that the earth does not move;" and in vain did Galileo argue that the Scriptures only speak phenomenally on scientific lines. But Galileo must recant, upon his knees, the Copernican "heresy." Rising up, he exclaimed in undertone: *E pur si muove*—"It does move for all that!" Alas! that this hoary sage, this high priest of the stars, should have lost a martyr's crown! The Kentucky and the Mississippi and other Conventions, according to the Landmark dogma, virtually say to Dr. Whitsitt: "Recant your heresy against Scripture and history which demand that the English Anabaptists *must* have immersed before 1641, or else step down and out." In vain would Dr. Whitsitt show that there is neither Scripture nor history for such a dogma; and if he were to kneel and recant, he would have to rise with an undertone exclamation:

“There was no such practice, for all that!” He will accept the martyr’s crown the rather—and so of those who agree with him.

How different the tone of Christian scholarship! Dr. J. B. Thomas who seeks to overthrow Dr. Whitsitt’s theory, says: “The historic question opened by Dr. Whitsitt seems to me perfectly legitimate and fairly entitled to candid investigation. I do not sympathize with, nor do I easily understand, the expression of resentment because of the frank expression of opinion upon a matter of remote fact having, in the opinion of most Baptists, no serious present significance.” Again he says: “It would be indecorous, not to say silly, to affect to treat as insignificant the formidable array of testimony which has convinced so discriminating a judge as Dr. Whitsitt, to say nothing of the later concurrence of careful and competent investigators, such as professors Newman and Vedder.” Dr. Newman who agrees with Dr. Whitsitt in theory, and yet who urged his apology for the manner in which he introduced his thesis, says: “Dr. Whitsitt’s services to the denomination have been too long continued, and too distinguished, and his loyalty to the principles and practices of the denomination too thoroughly tested, to admit of his being deposed and dishonored for heresy and disloyalty. The conclusions that he has reached are, in the main, such as have long been accepted by the great majority of those who have made a specialty of Baptist history.”

The Kentucky resolutions, in the face of the Wilmington adjustment, strike a deadly blow and inflict a wound which will not soon, if ever, be healed. Whether they shall divide the denomination or not, they demand a humiliation of Dr. Whitsitt, which, in the light of Baptist history, would bring permanent disgrace upon us in the eyes of the scholarly and the Christian world. I would appeal to our brethren of every shade of difference to forbear this

unholy and unhappy movement to degrade the President of our Seminary upon a question of history in which he is evidently right. I appeal again to those who stand upon higher Baptist ground to stand fast against the dogma of traditional succession in the future, as we have against hard-shellism in the past; and let us plant ourselves more firmly upon the Word of God as our sole rule of faith and practice. Whatever the glorious history of Baptists as a people from the apostles till now, let us not base it upon tradition as of inquisitorial authority and a test of orthodoxy equal with the Bible. Even "Baptist usage," like Baptist history, is sometimes a variable and questionable rule of authority; and the only infallible standard of doctrine and discipline among Baptists is the Gospel. For his early mistakes Dr. Whitsitt has amply explained and apologized; and his historical theory involves only a matter of opinion and not an article of Baptist faith or practice.

Finally, my mind has not changed with regard to the spirit of this controversy. With some, its tone is Romish in its intolerance and severity. However honest the convictions of traditionalism, it inspires an unspiritual and inquisitorial pride. It crucified Christ, made all the martyrs and throttled conscience in all the ages. Some have privately suggested that Dr. Whitsitt "ought to be burnt in effigy;" and but for our creed of liberty and want of power, a few of us might rekindle again the fires of Smithfield. The spirit is here. Some of our journalism, to say nothing of oral utterances and private correspondence, is full of hate, venom, crimination, ridicule, and harsh epithet—the echoes of ignorance, superstition and bigotry. Some have adopted the Romish motto that "the end justifies the means" in doing evil that good may come! Demagogy and sycophancy, too, are here and there prominent in the wake of popular proscription and persecuting power;

and, as usual, they are sometimes expert in the use of this unhappy occasion to promote discord, seek profit or preferment, or take revenge. I mention the things I see and hear and read with sadness and sorrow—not to wound the heart of any, but to correct these evils; and I wish to aver that, in my soul, I have no ill-will even to those who have sought my hurt in this contention. I congratulate those, on both sides, who have maintained an honorable and brotherly attitude towards each other; and, for myself, I can say God bless all my brethren howsoever much they may differ from me in opinion.



# A REVIEW OF THE QUESTION.

By GEO. A. LOFTON, D.D.

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PP. 234; CLOTH, 50 CENTS.

## TESTIMONIALS.

From Dr. Henry C. Vedder, Professor of Church History, Crozer Theological Seminary:

"A week ago precisely I mailed to the *Christian Index* some comments on the Bampfield Document, in which I took exactly the ground of your main contention, namely: That Crosby and Evans distinctly favor the opinion that immersion was introduced in 1641, and that Dr. Whitsitt has rediscovered what was once the general opinion among informed Baptists. The tradition that English Baptists always immersed is really of late origin, and apparently of American origin, since no reputable English writer can be quoted in its favor before the beginning of the present controversy. Your book foreshadows the triumphant vindication that is sure to come to Dr. Whitsitt in time."

From Dr. A. H. Newman, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Church History, McMaster University, Toronto, Canada:

"I have looked over with much interest your "Review of the Question." Your part of the work is highly creditable. Professor Vedder has reviewed the situation briefly but effectively. The book should have a large circulation among such Baptists as are interested in the question and are only desirous of getting at the facts."

Dr. Wm. H. Whitsitt, Professor of Church History, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, says:

"The work of Dr. Lofton occupies a niche of its own. It has of late been triumphantly demonstrated from original sources that immersion was first introduced among the English Anabaptists about the year 1641. Dr. Lofton has now shown that this conclusion was accepted by Thomas Crosby, the earliest English historian. \* \* \* Dr. Evans who wrote in the early sixties of our century, was able



once more to gain access to original documents, and he returns to the position occupied by Crosby. Dr. Lofton makes it clear that this action by Evans is nothing but a return to the ancient landmarks of our Baptist history. \* \* \* This is an excellent service by Dr. Lofton and deserves recognition."

Dr. W. Pope Yeaman, who wrote the introduction to Dr. Lofton's book, says:

"It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the preponderance of probability is on the side of the Whitsitt contention. The testimony introduced by some of Dr. Whitsitt's reviewers, but omitted by him, evidently corroborates the testimony which he has introduced and greatly strengthens his cause. \* \* \* Drs. Lofton, Newman and Vedder, have in their respective treatments of the subject of this volume, evinced an unpartizan, unprejudiced and Christian spirit of inquiry, research and argument. The reader who cares more for the truth than for partizan triumph will read the following pages with pleasure and profit."

Dr. J. B. Hawthorne says in the *Baptist and Reflector*:

"Dr. Lofton's book, "A Review of the Question," is a valuable contribution to Baptist literature. In it he not only exhibits a vast deal of historical information, but he demonstrates his capacity for historical criticism. It is apparent that he writes in no partizan spirit. He sets before us historical facts, and in the light of them leads us to conclusions that are perfectly natural and logical."

Prof. A. T. Robertson, of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, says:

"I was already convinced of the correctness of Dr. Whitsitt's position about the English Baptists, before reading your book. You have fortified that conviction and have put the matter so that the non-historian can see it clearly. Your use of Crosby is happy and just unanswerable."

The *Journal and Messenger* of Cincinnati says:

"Both the review of Dr. Lofton and also that of Prof. Newman are worthy of careful consideration, and bear very heavily against Dr. Whitsitt's critics and in favor of his book. \* \* \* We should be glad if all who have read any of the antagonistic volumes could read this. We believe that it would help to ground them in the truth."

The *Christian Index*, of Atlanta, Ga., says:

"Dr. Lofton has prepared a volume of much interest and no little value. It is a restatement of the arguments for the theory of the introduction of immersion in England in 1641. It also gives in full the papers of Dr. Newman as originally published in the *Index*, and a paper by Dr. Vedder from the *Examiner*. \* \* \* The book is a very strong presentation and the spirit is good. We do not believe a fairer discussion can be found. Dr. Lofton makes out a strong case."

The *Baptist Outlook*, of Indianapolis, Ind., says:

"Dr. George A. Lofton has just published a volume under the appropriate title, "A Review of the Question," including Messrs Newman's and Vedder's contributions, in which he espouses Dr. Whitsitt's side of the controversy with much ability; and it seems to us that those who have joined in the somewhat prejudiced attack on Dr. Whitsitt ought in honor to read Dr. Lofton's Review. The simple question is: 'What are the facts?'"

Dr. B. H. Carroll in an article in the *Texas Baptist Standard* on the Whitsitt Question, while disagreeing with Dr. Lofton, says:

"The ablest work written on the Whitsitt side of the controversy, is that of Dr. Lofton."

The *Evangel*, of Baltimore, Md., says:

"Dr. Lofton's book sustains Dr. Whitsitt's position that the English Anabaptists restored immersion as believer's baptism in the year 1641. It is a dignified production written in a Christian spirit.

The *Alabama Baptist* says:

"Dr. Lofton's book sustains Dr. Whitsitt in his position that the English Anabaptists restored immersion as believer's baptism in the year 1641. This is a scholarly, dignified production, and is worth reading."

Dr. C. S. Gardner in the *Baptist Courier*, Greeneville, S. C.:

"I can commend Dr. Lofton's book, "A Review of the Question," to the readers of the *Courier*. Dr. Lofton has long been a student of Baptist history, and what he says is worth reading. In this book he has performed a real

and valuable service, and will help his readers to get a clear and intelligent view of the historical question around which controversy has been raging for several months. \* \* \* Dr. Lofton is known to be thoroughly sound and conservative in his theological views and in his earnest devotion to Baptist principles; and I take pleasure in recommending his really valuable contribution to the literature of this subject, including Dr. Newman's articles published in the *Christian Index*, and an article by Dr. Vedder in the *Examiner*."

*The Central Baptist:*

"Dr. Lofton's book is a valuable contribution to a discussion which has created a great deal of interest."

*The American Baptist Flag*, while disagreeing with the author, says:

"Dr. Lofton has written the ablest book on the Whitsitt side of the controversy."





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